











In 3,456,000 seconds the meaning will be clear







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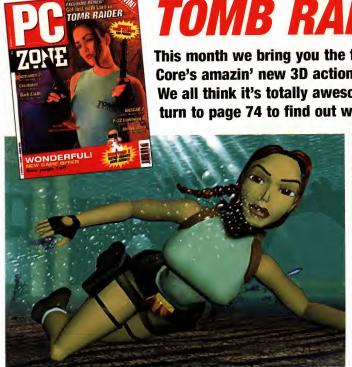
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The January issue of PC Zone goes on sale Thursday 28th November

PC Zone is the UK's best-selling PC games magazine: ABC 43,149







This month we bring you the first ever review of Core's amazin' new 3D action/adventure Tomb Raider. We all think it's totally awesome (a rarity in itself), so turn to page 74 to find out why...









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COVER DISKS

CD ZONE

Help!

The CD not working? HD playing up? The PC's being a total bast? Don't worry – phone our helpline and sort yourself out pronto!:

HD DISK HELP

Phone Matthew on 01274 736990 Any week day between 9am and 4pm

CD-ROM HELP

Phone ABT on 01708 250250

Any week day between 11am and 6pm
(Please DO NOT phone the PC Zone office as
your calls will NOT be answered)

If you are calling either help line, then please take note of the following points:

- If possible have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down as much relevant information as possible ie system type, sound card, RAM etc, plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down the relevant info.

No CD?

If you are unable to get your grubby paws on the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out this slip, enclose your HD from the cover plus a cheque for a whole £1 and send it to:

CD Exchange (43), PC Zone, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover St, London W1P 7HJ

Ioui	uetans (piea	se print cie	arry)	
Nam	e:			
Addr	ess:			

Please make cheques payable to:

DENNIS PUBLISHING Ltd.

CDs from previous issues are also available.





HD DISKS

To run the software on this month's HDs, go into Windows and under File Manager click on SETUP.EXE. The program will then take you through a simple installation routine and install itself onto your hard drive. Alternatively, if you're running Windows 95 click on the floppy drive icon and click on SETUP.EXE.

Crystal Caliburn (Starplay Productions)

No cover CD would be complete without a pinball demo, so here's this month's silver ball injection.

Crystal Caliburn, as it's known, is a high-res, high-octane roll 'em up with all the features you'd expect in a game of this type. Plus a few more (such as multiball mode). This demo version has a time limit, so you won't be able to play it forever – but you will have time to get a taste of the action. Enjoy it while it lasts.

Controls

Z Left flipper
/ Right flipper
Shift Fire ball
Space
Ctrl & I Insert coin
Ctrl & N New game
Esc Quit and go
home, sulking.

Specs: 486DX33/SVGA/Win3.1/95



CD-ROM

To run this month's CD, exit to DOS, change to your CD drive (it's probably D:) and then type PCZONE. This will automatically launch the menu system and then it's simply a question of pointing and clicking your way through the various options to install the *various demos to your hard drive. Full instructions are included on the CD.

NASCAR 2 (Sierrra)

Hot on the heels of Europress' excellent Network Q RAC Rally comes the follow-up to NASCAR Racing, from Papyrus. Unremitting fender-bending action is the order of the day, as you race like the Devil himself against an unruly mob of professional drivers (ie. maniacs). Cue plenty of thrills, spills, and James Dean-style vehicle hi-jinks. The full game is all set to be Windows 95 compatible - this demo, however, needs to be run in DOS mode. There's still quite a bit of work to be done on various aspects of the game (including the frame rate), but this twotrack demo should give you a taste of things to come.

GETTING STARTED

When you first run the demo, select "Options" and set your controls or calibrate your joystick (if you have one). Then go back to the main menu, choose 'Quick Race', and you're away. There are two tracks at your disposal — Watkins Glen and the NAPA 500 — and more to come in the full release. If you want to tinker with the number of opponents, the length of the race, etc, feel free. After all, you are the master of all you survey, aren't you?

CONTROLS

Gamepad/Joystick, Keyboard (Choose 'options' from the main menu to define your own keys) **Specs:** P75 8Mb RAM

IT'S COMING RIGHT AT US! As anybody who's played IndyCar or NASCAR can tell you, there are few things in life more

IndyCar or NASCAR can tell you, there are few things in life more satisfying than turning your car around and heading round the track backwards.

Indeed, whilst we would never condone drink-driving in the real world, there's no reason why you can't enjoy it in the safety of your own home – so why not get really hammered first? We're so hard we drive around the track backwards with our eyes closed, taking slugs from a whisky bottle, with a gun pressed hard against our heads. Because we're 'rock and roll', and you're not. You bunch of girls. Oh, sorry, Lara.



John Madden 97 (EA Sports)

Forty-two! Forty-two! Hut! Hut! Yes, it's American Football time, ladies and gentlemen. Squeeze your hulking carcass into some tight spandex tights (which will do for your testicles what a flower press does for a daisy), pop a big helmet on your head, and get down to business. This is the latest incarnation of EA Sport's phenomenally popular John Madden series of 'Yankee Soccer' sims, it runs under DOS, and it's completely great.

(N.B. You can define movement and the two fire keys - A and B - from the options screen)

(Before the Snap)

Select audible 1, 2, 3, or 4

Audible back to the original play Call a fake snap signal Select primary receiver

Snap the ball Pause the game Instant replay **Call Timeout**

Rushing

Move a player Burst of power/Spin

Cycle through receivers Pass to selected receiver

Receiving

Control receiver closest to the ball

Up, Down, Left, or

Right, then Tap

Tap Button A

Tap Button B Up, Left, or Right, then Tap Button B

Left/Right

ESC

Z or /

Hold Button B

(visitor/home)

Any direction

Button A

Button B

Button B Button A (hold for

Button B

bullet pass)

Button A

Start the play Aim the kick Kick the ball Call an onside kick (kickoff only)

Dive for the ball

DEFENSE

(Before the Snap)

Move a player Select audible 1, 2, 3, or 4

Audible back to the original play Select player to control Pause Instant replay

Raise hands (when close to the ball)

Call Timeout (After the Snap)

Control player closest to the ball Dive/Raise hands

Control player Call an onside kick reception

Specs: P75 8Mb RAM

Button B **Button A**

Button B Left/Right Button B **Button A**

Any direction Up, Down, Left, or Right and Tap Button A

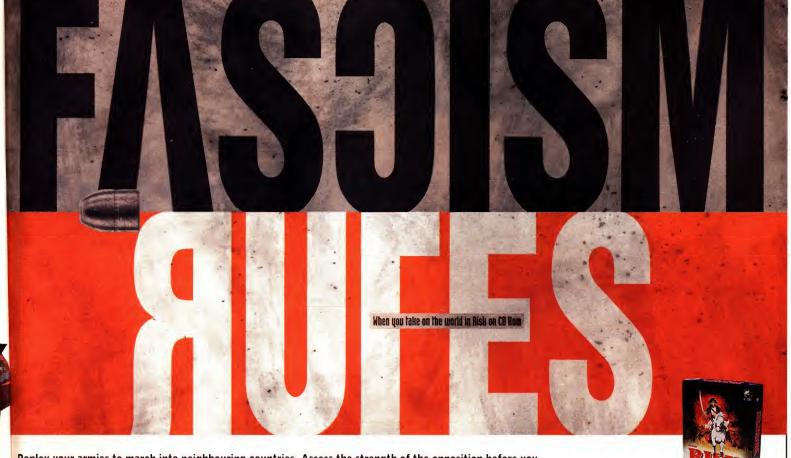
Tap Button A Button B ESC (visitor/home)

Button B

Button A Any direction Button A



JOHN MADDEN - HMMMM Take a look at Mr. John Madden. A long, hard look. What's he so bloody cheerful about, eh? What does he know that we don't (apart from the rules of American Football, that is)? What's his beet? Maybe he's on special pills or something. Maybe he's mad. Or maybe he's just got married to a seventeen-year-old sex kitten called Pushka, or Natalie, or Snogette. We shall probably never really know - but the truth is out there.



Deploy your armies to march into neighbouring countries. Assess the strength of the opposition before you let battle commence. Then destroy, or be destroyed in explosive 3D action. World domination is now no longer a dream. Also look out for Battleship, Cluedo, Monopoly, Trivial Pursuit, Othello and Yahtzee from Hasbro Interactive.

don't just play it. live

Swiv 3D (SCI)

In which old-school Swiv, the topdown shoot 'em up classic, effortlessly transmogrifies itself into Swiv 3D, the bang-up-to-date polygon-gasmic blast fest. In this demo, you won't have access to the buggy, skidoo, or hovership (all of which put in an appearance in the full version), but you will get to blast ten shades of shinola out of everything that gets in your way.



Key Helicopter
Up Fly forward
Down Fly back
Right Turn right
Left Turn left
5' Bank right
1<' Bank left



'M'

Fire special weapons Lock strafe

NB. The Buggy, Skidoo and Hover Ship are not available on this demo.

F1 Setup menu
Escape Exit to menu
Specs: P75 8Mb RAM

NOEL EDMONDS - WHAT A BASTARD! Why not increase your

gaming pleasure a hundredfold by imagining that your chopper is being piloted by TV's Mister Smug, Noel Edmonds – and then deliberately crashing into as many things as you can? Try to picture his poxy beard searing away to nothing as you go down in flames. His loathsome flesh sizzling like bacon against the white hot metal sides of the twisted, broken whirlybird. If that doesn't cheer you up, nothing will (save Prozac).



M.A.X. (DOS) (Interplay)

This month's second sci-fi strategy game. *M.A.X.* is the name, and grinding opponents to lunar dust is the game. It's a little like *Command & Conquer* with A-levels, so be sure to read all the briefings carefully before you begin. This demo version lets you have a crack at five whole training levels – obviously, the full version contains a fair few more than that. Get cracking.

Controls: Mouse/Keyboard Specs: 486DX66/8Mb RAM/DOS/SVGA

Fire standard weapon

Deadly Tide (Microsoft)

Microsoft come over all Rebel Assault in this aquatic FMV festival of firing. Featuring a veritable skipload of assured cut-scenes, and mucho classy in-game action, it's one of the most polished games of this type that we've ever seen. You move around by using the mouse, so you shouldn't have too much trouble memorising the

controls (unless you've recently had a stroke, in which case you probably don't know what you're reading, or why you're reading it anyway). Your task is simple; get through the level, and shoot absolutely everything, preferably in the face. Capisce?

Controls: Mouse/Keyboard (re-definable)/Joystick Specs: Pentium 75 min/Win 95 only

Monster Truck Madness (Microsoft)

Prepare to yell 'yee-haw!' like some loathesome, inbred hick as you get behind the wheel of an absurdly designed 'Monster Truck' and race your little heart out across a muddy, obstacle-laden track in this playable demo from



Microsoft. It's actually a darn sight more fun than you may expect, and the 3D graphics are really rather impressive. Just don't get a puncture – have you any idea how hard it is to find replacement tyres for these things?

Controls: Gamepad/Joystick

Keyboard controls can (and indeed should) be defined at the star of the game – look in the handy helpfile for more information.

Specs: Pentium 75 min/Win95/8Mb

HellBender (Microsoft)

Being Microsoft's follow-up to the quietly-received Fury 3, maybe this time around, someone will notice it. The full version (of which this demo represents but a fleeting snatch) contains tons more levels, and the voice of everyone's favourite ginger minge, X-filer Gillian Anderson. We heartily recommend that you use a joystick (in the name of GOD, don't try the mouse) to get the most out of it. Have fun.

Controls: Mouse, Keyboard, Joystick

Keyboard: Arrow keys Spacebar

Movement
Fire like a maniac
Target crosshairs

1-8 Select weapon
(There are tons more keys at your

disposal – check out the staggeringly comprehensive in-game manual for the full monty. We'd re-print them all here, but we wouldn't have room for the rest of the mag. And then you'd complain, wouldn't you? Bloody whingers.)

Specs: P75 8Mb RAM Win95 only.



TAKING IT LITERALLY Hellbender. That's WINDOWS

quite a concept. Can you imagine how cool it would be if you actually could, like, bend Hell itself? Over your knee? You'd be famous. It'd be an incredible variety act. You'd probably need asbestos trousers and gloves to do it, though. Not to mention very strong arms.



USM2 (DOS) (Sierra)

Or, to give it its altogether more comprehensible name, *Ultimate Soccer Manager 2*. Are you a bit of a 'statto'? Then it's monkey-spanking time. Take a lower League fledgling team to the top of the League and European glory in this fully playable demo. You'll have to be a bit skilful, however, as you've got a limited time in this demo to turn your squad of alcoholic, perm-wearing Essex boys into an awe-inspiring line-up of fully fit fighting soccer stars. Alan Ball and Ray Harford need not apply.

Controls: Mouse/Keyboard Specs: DOS/486DX33/8Mb RAM



HyperBlade (Activision)

In the future, Ice Hockey will look like this, apparently. HyperBlade is a stylish sci-fi sports sim for Windows 95, which lets you and a mate battle it out to see who's "Top of the Pucks". Except they're called 'Roks' in this, not pucks, and the pitch isn't flat, white and shiny, it's blue and curvy. That's the future for you. Anyway, it's agreebly Tron-like in appearance, and it moves along at a fair old nip, so what are you waiting for? Let the mag drop at your feet like a dead dove, and get stuck in to the playable demo on our CD.

Specs: P75 8Mb RAM Win95 only.

Controls:

(Arrow keys on the keyboard steer your movement)

Up Arrow Forward

(You must press and hold to maintain forward thrust)

Down Arrow Stop
Left Arrow Turn left
Right Arrow Jump
Double Up-Arrow Jump
Double Down-Arrow Crouch
Double Left-Arrow Side punch (left)
Double Right-Arrow Side punch (right)

S or CTRL Attack/fighting move.
(S + arrow keys gives you special fighting moves)

S + UP-ARROW Slash S + DOWN-ARROW Leg sweep

SPORTS AND DENTISTRY Certain sporting

events bring a smile to the lips of dentists everywhere, since the likelihood of the participants getting their teeth knocked out (which leads to expensive medical bills) is fairly high. Hockey is top of this list. Here's Dentistry Today's current sports guide, compiled by orthodontists nationwide...

Hockey: Fantastic Rugby: Great Soccer: Not bad

Badminton: Very poor Chess: Abysmal (unless a fight breaks out

over a pawn)

D or SHIFT Speed burs

Very important. Your speedburst bar appears in the upper left corner of the screen to show how much speed-burst you have available.

HINT: If you tap Speedburst while down, you get up more quickly.

C or Z Pass – while on Offense.
Change player – while on Defense.

Spacebar Shoot or Throw rok.

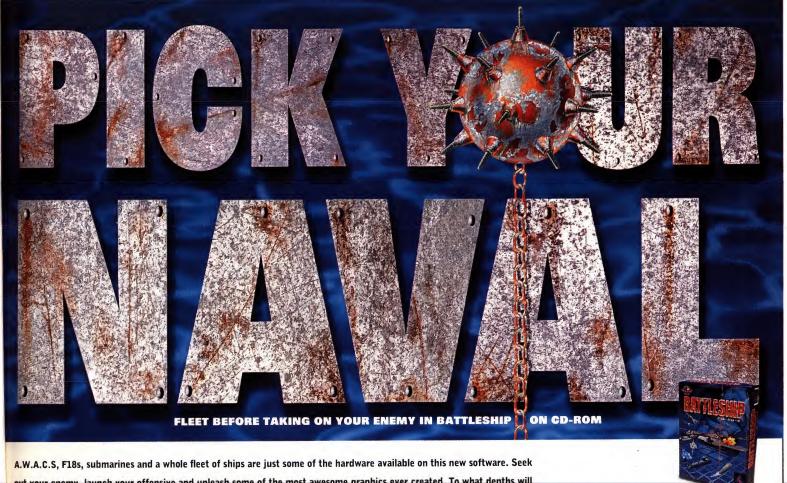
Hold the spacebar down to power up shot, then let go to release. The Shot

Cam appears in the upper right corner when you are shooting.

HINT: If you shoot while jumping, you can get a trick shot.

F9 Switch between alternate keyboard configurations.





A.W.A.C.S, F18s, submarines and a whole fleet of ships are just some of the hardware available on this new software. Seek out your enemy, launch your offensive and unleash some of the most awesome graphics ever created. To what depths will you sink to try and destroy the enemy? Also look out for Risk, Cluedo, Monopoly, Trivial Pursuit, Othello and Yahtzee from Hasbro Interactive.

don't just play it. live it

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Krazy Ivan (Psygnosis)

A belated conversion for this PlayStation kill 'em up, but better late than never, say we. It's got a Russian hero, loads of big 'mechs', and Sarah Stockbridge (mad blonde model type) all jostling for position within its binary code. A first-person view 3D shooty job, it didn't quite set the world alight in the console sector; maybe it'll fare better on the PC. See what you make of it.



Controls: Joystick/Keyboard

(Keyboard controls may be defined on the options screen)

Specs: Win95, 8Mb RAM/Pentium 75 or better/CD-ROM/Graphics Accelerated VGA

FROM RUSSIA WITHOUT LOVE The

Russians are our best mates nowadays. Unless that Zhirinovsky bloke gets in, that is. Have you read about that lunatic? He's off his bloody head. Not only does he openly brag about how he'll bomb us all to kingdom come if he ever gets into office, he also claims to have invented some kind of 'Sonic Death Ray'. No kidding. He's barmy. He's the Antichrist.

Star General (Mindscape)

Hex, hex, hex. Space, space, space. Put 'em together and what have you got?'
Star General, that's what. It's a hex game set in space. It's got lots of space, and lots of hex, and lots of space for lots more hex. It also has loads of spaceships, soldiers, and hex (although I think I've already mentioned that). May the force be with you.

Controls: Mouse/Keyboard Specs: 486DX266/8Mb/Win 95





YET ANOTHER QUAKE BONUS!

We've bunged Q-Spy on this month's CD as well. Basically, it's a Windows 95 interface that scans the Internet for up and running *Quake* servers, then connects you at the touch of a button. Be sure to look at the README file before you get stuck in.

ESSENTIALS

As ever, we're hurling helpful applications at you with a speed and intensity that is awesome to behold. Amongst this month's goodies are an all-new version of the much-admired *Paint Shop Pro*, an Internet news reader (with a built-in graphic viewer, for those of you who... erm... decode a lot of 'arty' photographs), Microsoft's altogether spanky *Internet Explorer V.3*, *McAfee Virus Shield*, and a program that wipes your bottom for you and removes skid-marks from knickers.

Actually, I lied about that last one. Just keeping you on your toes. Bye, bye.

Baku Baku Animal (Sega)

This, in the words of 'Tiswas', is what we want. Barking mad Japanese puzzling action *par excellence* is the order of the day in this fearsomely addictive *Tetris*-style weird 'em up.

The idea is to match foodstuffs with the relevant animal heads as they fall from the top of the screen (monkeys eat bananas, dogs eat bones, etc). Match the pairs faster than your opponent and you'll be crowned "Zookeeper of the Year". And you'll win. It makes no sense whatsoever, and we love it like a son. Nice one, Sega.

Controls: Gamepad (recommended), keyboard. Keyboard: Cursor keys move piece (down to drop) Shift rotate Specs: Pentium only/Win 95/8Mb RAM



DID YOU KNOW? Baku Baku Animal isn't a game. In fact, it's a documentary. The on-screen graphics aren't computer-generated at all. No, it's all being broadcast live onto your screen from the inside of a madman's head. He lives on the Isle of Sheppy, inside a fridge at the bottom of a swamp. Really.

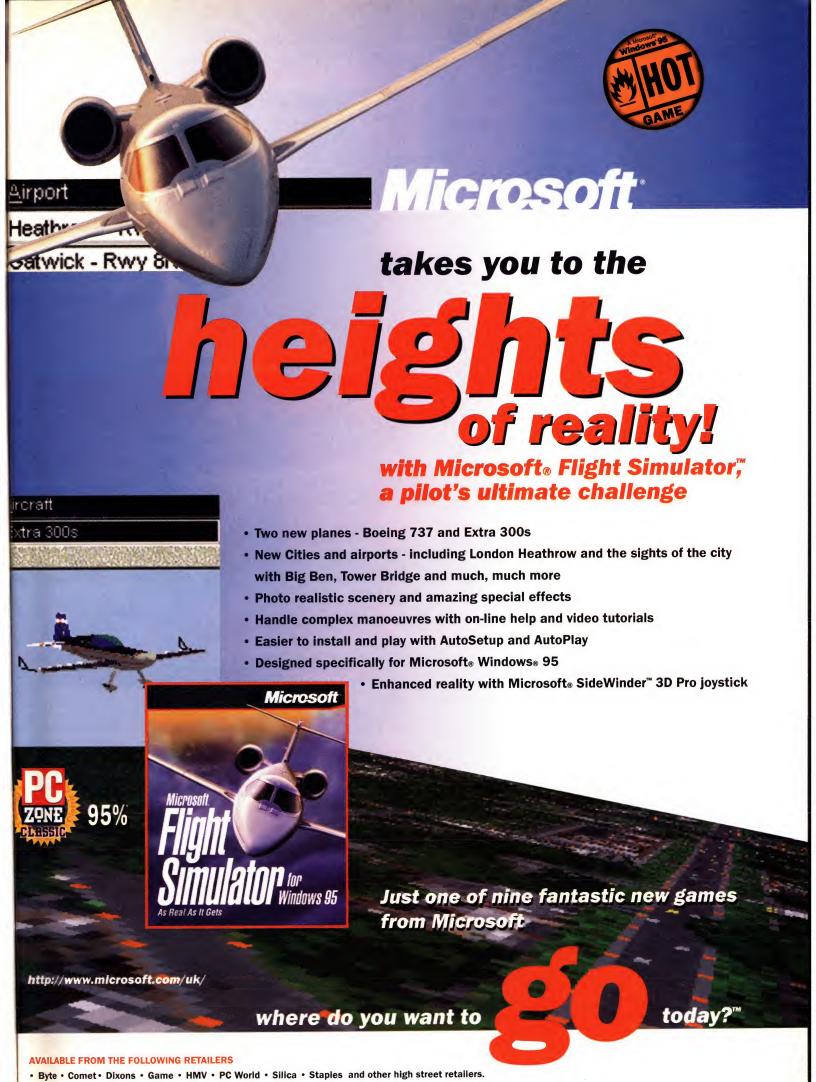
Bug! (Sega)

Another Saturn-to-PC convert, *Bug!* is a 3D platform game replete with zany 'toon visuals, a boppy soundtrack, and an obnoxious lead character. What more could you ask for (apart from some cake)? Like the other Sega PC titles, it's Windows 95 only, and it's really rather spiffy. This demo lets you tackle a couple of levels – the full version has shitloads more. Get cracking, you insectoid hordes, you.

Controls: Gamepad (recommended), keyboard Keyboard: Cursor keys movement Ctrl Jump Specs: Pentium only/Win 95/8Mb RAM



HELLO? RENTOKILL? We're all scratching our heads here at *PC Zone*, and it's not just because we've all infested with lice. No, what's puzzling us is this: exactly what kind of bug is *Bug!* supposed to represent? He's not a woodlouse, that's for sure – but that's as much as we know. If you think you've got it, write the answer on a postcard. Then shove it up your backside, because we don't really care. We're just filling space.



Get Gurued!

Studio 3DO's new software cheating device, Game Guru, is now available exclusively as a cut-down demo on this month's PC Zone. To find out exactly what Game Guru is capable of, read on...

Full product features:

- Ocean Code Hunter feature to locate your own cheats
- Full-featured Hex Editor specifically designed for cheating
- Al Table function. It uses simple logic to instantly locate possible cheat values
- Hidden CD player

Plus lots more...

TUDIO 3DO INTRODUCES DEDICATED GAME CONSOLE-STYLE CHEATING WITH the Game Guru: Game Enhancer – a software-based program that requires no hardware and no difficult-to-use TSR programs. It sports a completely open architecture, so you can download new cheat codes, create your own, and spread cheats and hacks to your friends. Game Guru works directly with the files saved on your hard drive. Once a cheat is applied to a game, you don't need to re-run Game Guru to keep the cheat working.

The Game Guru: Game Enhancer was designed for both novice and advanced PC gamers, so those of you who have difficulty spelling your own name need not worry. All the various options, patches and doobries are accessible through the rather user-friendly point-and-click interface, and are sectioned off into Code Library (existing cheat patches) and Knowledge Base (an encyclopaedia of known in-built cheats) sections. All the latest games are supported and listed alphabetically and by publisher.

In this demo version, you have access to a limited portion of *Game Guru*'s Code Library and Knowledge Base. Other sections of the product are visible, but you will not be able to access them.

Demo features:

- Sample cheat patches and codes
- Guiding help messages
- Multi-tasking windows
- Ability to open a DOS window and return
- User customisable backdrops
- Large moving/draggable windows
- Multiple screen resolutions
- Built-in screen saver



Trying out cheat codes

To test out a cheat code, select the Code Library and choose a game from the list in the upper left window. Try Command & Conquer. If you haven't done so already, you will need to play C&C and save your game at least once on the hard drive. If you have the v.1.19 upgrade available from Westwood you can select a cheat from the Game Guru demo version.

In the lower window, highlight a cheat, such as the 'All infantry \$1'. Click on the 'Apply Cheat' button. *Game Guru* will automatically search your hard drive for the files to patch. The Code Library knows exactly which files to update depending on the title, making the whole process extremely simple.

EXCLUSIVE!



World Wide Cheat Network

Game Guru is designed to take advantage of the World Wide Web by allowing users to post and trade codes freely on any Web site. 3DO will regularly post update codes on their Web page, each of which can be incorporated into the Game Guru proper using the Code Manager feature.



Additional Game Guru Codes

Platform: PC

Dark Forces Descent Fpic Pinhall 3-D Ultra Pinhall

- Dark Forces

(LucasArts version 1 0)

These codes are for starting on level one.

Patch the file: DARKPILO.CFG

Get new codes from 3DO's World Wide Web site, if you have Internet access, that is.



Useful things to know

● The ESC key allows you to abort the current operation or to return to the previous menu. A good rule of thumb is 'when in doubt, press ESC'.

If you leave the mouse idle for a few seconds, Game Guru gives a short text description of whatever function the pointer is positioned over.

Installation Requirements

Requirements: Floppy drive, 1.3 Mb of hard disk space, 6Mb RAM (8Mb recommended), Mouse, DOS or Windows 95, 486/33 MHz or higher, SVGA (640x480 or higher) Supports: Printer, SoundBlaster Controls: Mouse



The excuse you've been waiting for.



Arcade quality games from Sega are now on PC CD-ROM



A Ninth Ultima

Rejoice! Rejoice! For unto us hath sped news of Origin's latest installment in the Ultima saga. And lo, what fate will befall the Avatar this time?

ESCRIBED BY CREATOR RICHARD ('LORD British') Garriot as "an epic game to end the contemporary series of Ultimas", Ultima IX will mark the culmination of 15 years' investment in to the saga for the developers at Origin. Gamers who made their way through the previous titles can expect to see a completion of the history surrounding the Avatar. New players will have no problems with the story, however, because there's always loads

ima IX will feature a totally texture-mapped 3D world at can be viewed from virtually any angle

of stealin' and a-slayin' to be going on with and a host of helpful pointers to steer you in the right direction in the main game.

Ultima IX will not only be much bigger, in terms of size, than its predecessors, but a completely new 3D engine will be used to bring the series back to life once more. Every location and every item in the game will be made of polygons, including all the characters that stroll around the place. An advanced zoom feature and rotating camera view catch the best of the action from any angle, so combat and spellcasting are much improved but at the same time made easier to successfully execute.

Origin are staying tight-lipped about the storyline, but there's no doubt that Garriot's twisted pen will once again conjure up all manner of demonry in the final episode of the Guardian saga. A fair bit of fighting is anticipated as there are many dungeons to traverse on the path to righteousness. Hundreds of useful items litter the landscape - kick over some barrels into the path of an attacker and watch them dive for cover. Horses, ships and even flying dragons are expected to make guest appearances as forms of transport at some point in the game. Not to mention a whole host of other things, all in glorious 16-bit colour.



a IX – an a-maze-ing new adventure from Richard ord British' Garriot and the Origin crew.

Origin haven't yet ruled out the possibility of using a first-person perspective viewpoint in future Ultima episodes. Could this mean the fusing of a future Ultima X and the longproposed Ultima Underworld III? The mind simply boggles.

The only downside to this jubilant news is that Ultima IX will not see the light of day until August '97. The plan had originally been for a March release next year, but this release date fell by the wayside when Garriot and crew realised just what they had gotten themselves into.

Net surfers can keep up to date with what's happening with the Ultima series at any of the following Web sites:

http://www.ea.com/origin/english/index.html or http://www.bestware.net/whisper/woo/. 7



ndividual areas of Ultima IX will be graphically themed m tree houses to gigantic stone castle



Valk into a building in Ultima IX and the roof will suddenly



Itima IX will be released in August '97 – role-playing ns mark your diaries now

Tanks to the power of eleven

Can DMA Design turn the real-time strategy genre on its head with their barmy new action game Tanktics?

TITLE TO THE

ANKTICS, ODDLY ENOUGH, FEATURES LOTS of tanks. Over two million of the buggers, in fact. A huge variety of tank pieces (tracks, engine blocks and guns) are generated by a device called the Part-O-Matic™, which can then be taken away to build fighting machines using an anti-gravity crane. The developers claim that the combination of tanks made from all the different pieces numbers somewhere around 1011. And rest assured, that's a hell of a lot of tanks.

Drop a remote-control on top of a finished tank and it's under your control. Beacons dropped from the anti-grav crane will then send attack orders to your active tanks and trouble will thus commence.

DMA Design, the people who brought us Lemmings, may have struck something akin to gold with Tanktics. Brushing shoulders with the of the likes of Command & Conquer and Z, Tanktics approaches the real-time strategy genre from a completely new and original angle, replete with stunning 'cartoon' visuals and a typically British sense of humour.

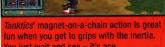
Everything in the game will be controlled via a single mouse, and an extremely accurate physics model has been developed to make play as comfortable as it could possibly be. Never fear though, combat and destruction are of primary concern, with hundreds of one-player missions spread over Stone Age, Medieval, Modern and Futuristic scenarios.

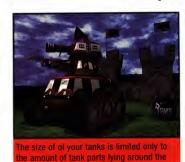


From what we've seen, Tanktics is going to be BIG. So be sure to look out for a full preview in an upcoming issue of PC Zone. 7









andscape to be collected.



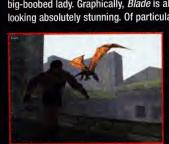
out of us every time we see it.

Flashing Spanish Blade

HOULD'VE HEARD THE SOUND IT MADE when our jaws hit the floor. Blade, a new 3D adventure game from Spanish development house Friendware, blew us away. Talk at the moment has the money on Unreal to take a follow-on step from Quake's advancements, but having seen Blade, we think it may now have some serious competition on its hands.

Set in a vast, intricately modelled world of barbarians and dragons, Blade is a full-on sword combat game with subtle role-playing elements that can be played either as a hunky bloke or a big-boobed lady. Graphically, Blade is already looking absolutely stunning. Of particular note are the extremely effective lighting effects, which, we assure you, will blow away anything you have seen before. A comprehensive collection of motion-captured characters are lined up to bring the world to life and we've seen some of them. Boy, are they good. In fact, the whole thing looks completely incredible.

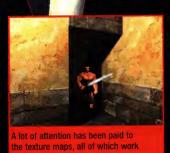
The most absurd thing about Blade's stunning introduction to the world of PC gaming is that it has yet to find a UK distributor. A whisper in our ear mentions the word 'Eidos', but that has yet to be confirmed. We'll let you know as and when.



amatic and totally, totally convincing







BULLETIN ROLLETIN

Rocket Jockey props up the bar

Rocket Science prove that the future is, as yet, undecided. Will we end up riding jet bikes in an arena, or pissed out of our heads in the cyber pub?

EWLY FORMED 'POWERHOUSE' PUBLISHER Rocket Science Mondadori has taken over distribution of its own titles *Rocket Jockey* and *The Space Bar*, leaving BMG Interactive with just the one Rocket Science title, *Obsidian*. RSM will design games that cater to European tastes using a development facility based in Italy, while sharing technologies and games with Rocket Science Games, Inc based in California.

Rocket Jockey will be the first title to be released through the company and could be described as 'polo of the future, played in the past'. Based in an outside arena, Rocket Jockey players mount old Dan Dare-style jet-powered pillions and try to out-score and out-hit each

other. Side-mounted grappling hooks allow Batmobile-like fast turns on strategically placed pillars, which is incredible fun once mastered. These hooks can also be used to pull other players off their bikes and smash them to pieces on the



(Above) Quite literally tear a piece off your opponent in *Rocket Jockey*.

(Left) Rocket Jockey: explosive, all-action combat where the last jockey riding is deemed the winner.





The Space Bar: the Thirsty Tentacle has been purpose built to accommodate any species that comes through its doors.

side wall! Good, honest fast, furious fun - that's what *Rocket Jockey* looks like being.

The Space Bar, on the other hand, sounds positively strange. Created by the infamous Steve Meretzky (author of many influential, text-only adventures of yesteryear), and Ron Cobb (rumoured to have been paid a hundred quid a creature for his work on the original Star Wars cantina scene), The Space Bar is a sci-fi mystery thriller where the characters go down the pub and get pissed a lot. We imagine there's more to it than that, but we'll have to wait until the end of November to find out.

Until then try: http://www.rocketsci.com for more details. 7

Quake 2! Hexen 2!

There's news of a new *Quake* game. Already. Plus more swords, sorcery and spellcasting in a follow-up to *Hexen*.

RIKEY. NO SOONER HAD OUR SPOOGE-ganglions been squeezed to pinpoint size by the unbearable sights and delights of Quake than news comes to us not just of a sequel to the Q game, but also a follow-up to 'Doom-intights' RPG cum axe 'em up, Hexen. Both titles will be followed by the immortal digit '2' and

will sport the unrivalled chunk of programming prowess that is the *Quake* engine. *Hexen 2*, however, will be using an 'advanced' version of the engine, not only glowing with new architectural details but also involving much of the scripting and gameplay enhancements which made

Hexen such a winner – plus, of course, Quake's 16-player network action. And some trolls.

Quake 2, on the other hand, is hard to predict. Details are scant at present, but all things point to it being at 'drawing board' stage. Tim Willits, one of iD's level supremos, spent most of October "sketching out the overall design of Quake 2 on grid paper". Early reports suggest there will be a coherent plot without the – let's face it – wanky 'slipgate' guffery which padded the first one, and that the story will dwell more on the 'cyberpunky' elements which made

(Above) Look carefully at this *Quake 2* shot. Is it for real, or is someone messing around with our minds?

(Left) Gloomy gothic textures abound in the all-new, all-improved *Hexen 2*.

Doom so cool. There are also rumours that level by level progression will have more weight with objects and tasks completed on one level affecting the next and so on. Reports also tell of enhanced design tools being implemented at in Software's HQ in Texas which will bring "minor but substantial tweaks to the architecture".

No word on a distributor yet. No word on new weapons or monsters. In fact, only these two screenshots have seen the light of day thus far, but anticipate seeing many, many more over the forthcoming months. **Z**

G-Nome the letter

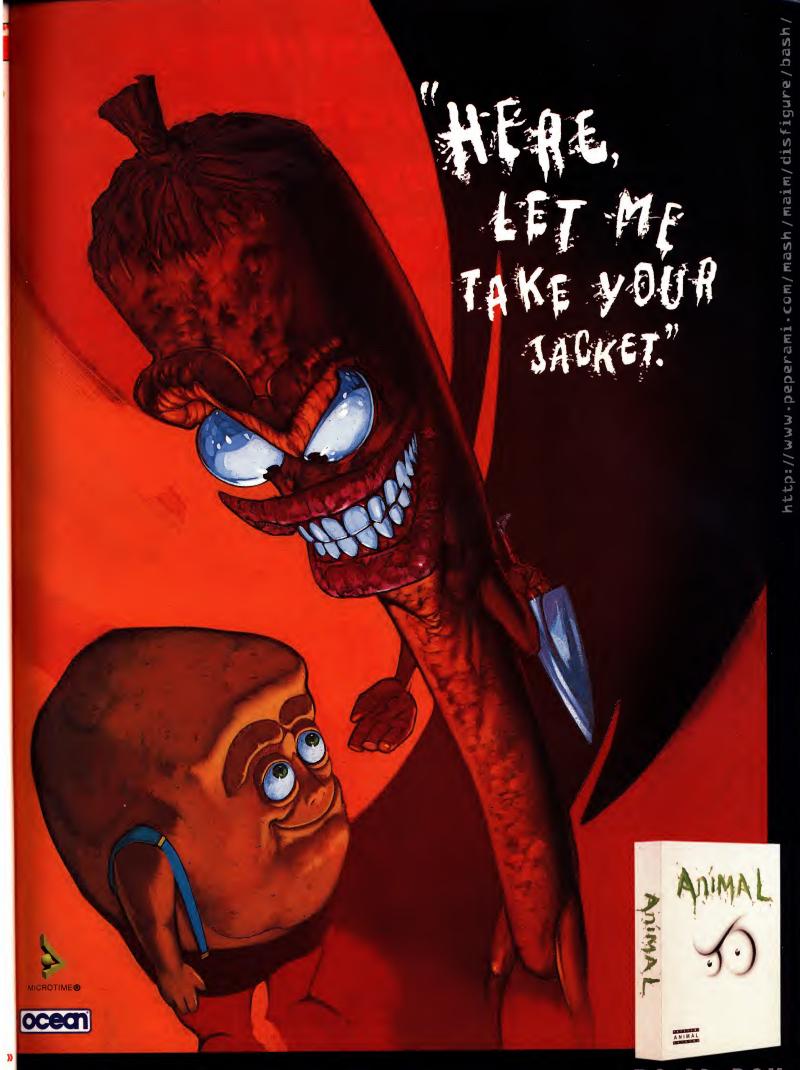
HE NEVER-ENDING ONSLAUGHT OF BIG
Robot GamesTM continues with the latest
release from 7th Level, *G-Nome*. Using their
much-hyped TopGun authoring software, *G-Nome*puts you in the pants of Joshua Gant as he
leads a sort of futuristic A-Team through various
combat, espionage, sabotage and scavenging
missions against three enemy races. All while
sitting behind the controls of a giant stompy robot
as you squish enemy soldiers under your feet.

G-Nome is networkable for up to eight other human players, but for once this isn't being used as a substitute for poor computer opposition. "While the Al in so many other games is both simplistic and predictable, the reasoning in G-Nome is deeper than simply "fight or flee'," explains Dan Donahue, the chap in charge of the game's Al. "We use a combination of situational awareness data tables and tactical heuristics that facilitate goal-directed, event-driven reasoning."

More information can be gleaned from 7th Level's website at: http://www.7thlevel.com. 2



Graphically, *G-Nome* is as good as all the other Big Robot GamesTM as this shot shows.



PC CD-ROM

lt's a byte of an Animal

This Christmas, 8 high performance cars will be joyridden...



BYYOU





BETTER THAN PRISON





BULLETIN BULLETIN

Activision stay active

Diversifying their current range of PC games, Activision take to the skies, to space and to the Internet.

HE TENTATIVELY TITLED NETSTORM IS THE latest in a long line of on-line games making use of Internet-based multiplayer technology. Set in a detailed fantasy world, NetStorm allows players to control island fortresses that float among the clouds. Players



A-10 Cuba! – first in a line of combat flight sims from Titanic Entertainment, to be released through Activision in the UK.

must harness the energies of the wind, rain, thunder and sun to create civilisations, build fortresses, sustain populations, prepare for war and battle each other for land and resources. Once a player has successfully won a series of battles, he can graduate to more advanced levels of the game. Following in the footsteps of Virgin's SubSpace, and 3Do's Meridian 59, Activision's NetStorm is currently slated for a Summer '97 release.

Dark Reign: The Future Of War is another first for Activision, it being the company's first ever attempt at the C&C-ruled real-time strategy genre. Set in a distant future ravaged by civil war and a scarcity of Earth's most precious substance, water, Dark Reign follows the struggle between the forces of the Imperium Army and the Freedom Guards.

Finally from Activision come a whole host of combat flight sims, starting with A-10 Cuba! – the long-awaited sequel to A-10 Attack! (voted Mac game of the year in 1995, no less). A-10 Gulf! and Dogfight are to follow. Both will be released some time early next year.

Http://www.activision.com offers more information on all of the above. So go get it. 7



Dark Reign: The Future Of War – play either the renegade reedom Guard forces or the powerful Imperium army.



Dark Reign draws the player into an engaging sci-fi universe where armies duel for inter-planetary domination in more than 30 non-linear battles.

Shooting 'Stars!'

Will Empire's *Stars!*, a new strategy game from the programmers who created *Excel*, be the first ever strategy game to incorporate macros?

MPIRE INTERACTIVE HAVE JUST signed a new turn-based resource management game developed by two former Microsoft employees who helped make *Excel* such a useful office tool.

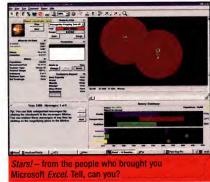
As you'd expect, their game is very (very) complex, full of lots of little pull-down windows, toggable stat boxes, squinty hi-res graphics and will (allegedly) take players light years to even get started. It's also enormous, the playing area spanning a massive interstellar solar system teeming with other alien races, planets, asteroids and stars just waiting to be mined, colonised and turned into industrial wastelands.

Although the game does feature combat, it's really about using and exploiting the resources available and developing new technologies to help you fight against the numerous other alien races who are bent on colonising the whole of the universe before you do.

Stars! isn't really aimed at the Warcraft 2/X-COM/C&C

crowd, as its turn-based combat, intense resource management and rather underwhelming presentation will no doubt force anyone but die-hard strategy heads to run a mile. However, *Stars!* reputedly boasts a very complex AI and is already causing quite a stir among the on-line gaming community (it will support up to 16 players) who are gagging to get their hands on a full version. *Stars!* will retail at around £29.99 and will be released in December.

So if you want to know more, check out http://www.empire.co.uk for further details. Z



Magic show from 3D0

3DO's recent acquisition of strategy-head developers New World Computing has given the company a spread of new Winter releases to enthuse about.

eroes Of Might & Magic II: The Succession Wars is the rather lengthily-entitled follow-up to 1995's excellent Heroes of Might & Magic, and is certainly worth keeping an eye on. Those of you familiar with the politics of the land of Enroth will be interested to hear that Lord Ironfist is now dead and that civil war has broken out in the ensuing scrabble for power between his two sons. Take control of either side and the fight for domination will commence. M&M, C&C – what next B&B?

Following on from that, however, comes *Wages Of War* – a full-scale 'mercenary simulator' with turn-based combat sections. Players must negotiate contracts, choose squads and buy weapons in the 'serious' part of the game (but just *how* serious we don't yet know), then fight it out in an ever-changing 3D rendered arena. A new Al technique called 'Assault Ware' is being used for

the first time which allows multiple orders to be issued on a single mouse click. Lazy players will rejoice.

For more info try http:// www.3do.com or http:// www.nwcomputing.com. z





(Above) The highly anticipated sequel to *Heroes Of Might & Magic*.

(Left) Assemble your very own squad of highly-paid contract killers in *Wages Of War*. If you're weird.

BULLETIN TO THE

Tough Nut Identity Parade



N CELEBRATION OF Z'S RECENT ROLLout we have a few items of interest to give away to a number of lucky, wellsighted, readers in The Tough Nut Identity Parade. Below, eight Toughs are paraded before you. Two of them stand accused of "causing trouble, having a laugh, and getting into fights, and that" and face severe disciplinary charges at the hands of Kenny, their commanding officer. And, in this all-

new 'interactive quiz', YOU assume the role of 'Kenny' in his search for the suspected hooligans!

The scars of many battles have rearranged a face or two here, and the two suspects are distinguishable only by the fact that they are identical to each other. You are the judge. You are the jury. You are the executioner. Identify the two robots and order their immediate court martial by writing to us with the answer. First ten correct answers pulled out of the hat win a Z jacket, a copy of the game, and their very own Z keyring.



Answers on a postcard to:

Off Yer Zed!, PC Zone, CPZ612B, Customer Interface, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ.

All entries to be received by December 20th 1996.

The editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into (ie. don't call to see if you have won, or we shall strike you off like a naughty doctor). Repeat entries will result in disqualification.

Is SCI's new 'Gladiatorial Simulator' an 'excitingly different' addition to the first-person action genre?

WO YEARS IN THE MAKING, and apparently costing an arm and a leg, XS, the latest in a steady line of first-person shoot 'em ups, is not too far off completion and really does have a lot to prove when it eventually hits the shelves in November.

Described as a 'Gladiatorial Simulator', XS pits the player against 60 other highly intelligent opponents in 20 different arenas, all fighting for nothing else but cold, hard cash. Killing other players earns money and a meaner reputation, so survival is made easier in later rounds.

XS claims to feature an AI system so advanced that computer opponents are able to decide when to attack, when to retreat, who to form alliances with and, more importantly, how you fight so that counter-attacking techniques

that does all the fighting for you if the doorbell goes and you have to dash off but don't want to quit out of the game! Maybe a simple 'pause' would have sufficed?

differ. There's even an AI routine

Motion-captured animation and an excellent Dune-style body shield may well prove plus points, as will the now expected link-up death match modes.

However, the real icing on the cake, as far as XS' developers are concerned, is the 'Kill Card' fighting history database which records everything that happens as you play through the game. Seems bizarre that they can get so hot under the collar about what is essentially a glorified 'save game slot'.

Oh well. Web browsers at http://sci.co.uk will find more information about the game. Z





Body Count

Despite the (unofficial) Anco motto of 'we don't do owt else but football games', Body Count is, in fact, the first ever Vinnie Jones simulator, And not a shoot 'em up.

KAY, SO WE LIED. BODY COUNT doesn't have a single thing to do with football. It's all about weapons and fighting and stuff like that.

First impressions are that Body Count appears quite 'old school' by design. In some ways it resembles

Worms, what with your character aiming and shooting projectile weapons using an elevated pointer. Every part of the landscape is destroyable as in Worms too, which allows things like water tanks to be holed causing waves of destructive water to take out your enemies. Over 40 weapons, from a crossbow (useful?) to a plasma cannon (really

useful!) are there for the taking, spread over 20 missions set in locations such as Stonehenge, the Pyramids and Atlantis.

Body Count will be out November, priced £29.99. Http://www.anco.co.uk for more info. z



Blowing great chunks out of the scenery could prove to be the most exciting part in the game.

BRINGS OUT THE YOB IN YOU



Revolutionary 4 player simultaneous split screen action
for PC CD Rom (with multi-tap or keyboard & joypads)*

Up to 27 stunning 3D tracks and backgrounds
Superb gameplay options including micro mode,
rumble mode and full multiple angle playbacks
Intelligent CPU cars that adapt to your ability
4 levels of difficulty vary from easy to crazy ideal for both learners and masters
Loaded with hidden options and secret tracks
The essential racing and fighting kart game

100% PURE GAMEPLAY

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SO MAD, IT'LL DRIVE

YOU ROUND THE BEND.



More from Maxis

Forever quiding the sim genre in new and exciting directions, Maxis once again prove that their ideas are still as sharp as they've ever been.

IMSEWAGE FARM, SIMCAT BURGLER, SimLondon Underground, SimKibbutz and SimCity Centre. What do all of these games have in common? That's right, none of them actually exist. But they could exist, if Maxis' game designers really put their mind to it. That lot could probably SimAnything.

Maxis have been churning out Sim games for decades, most of them minor hits, with the odd exception such as SimCity 2000 and the original SimCity. Lucky for us, the old boys have not lost their touch, and a new batch of Sim-related tomfoolery is on the cards for a winter release.

Maxis promised some time ago that all their new games would be cross-playable, and Sim-Copter demonstrates this feature to amazing effect. Load your city files from SimCity 2000 in SimCopter and you'll be able to fly over them in a series of daring missions. It's all in full 3D too, which is a pleasant surprise from Maxis.

There are two ways to play SimCopter: open-ended, having to deal with the everyday



problems associated with a large city (including fire-fighting duties), and as a career through an increasingly difficult set of pre-defined city missions. Joyrider interception, criminal pursuit, rescue at sea and riot control missions are there to break you in gently, with night time sorties the real big test. Already looking good, SimCopter will be out in time for Christmas so keep 'em peeled.

SimGolf needs little by way of description because it really is no more than a game about the sport of golf (which you obviously knew),



complete with sophisticated course designer bolted onto the side (which you must've already guessed would've been Maxis' angle on the sport... tsk, I ask you). But no, there actually is more to it than you'd expect... the MouseSwing™ interface, for starters, swings the club realistically as you push your mouse

and there's also helpful commentary for some geezer called Robert Trent Jones. Whoever he is.

Contact Http://www.maxis.com for more Simular bloke-on-girl action. Er... sorry, we mean, information. Z



ow the hell do I get out of this chickenshit outfit? (Guess



nbelievable but true – you can take a jolly helicopter ride



Carmageddon

HE MESSAGE BEING "KILL!" IN THIS INSTANCE, for Carmageddon is no ordinary racer - it is legalised 'death on the roads'. Heavily influenced by the cult movie Deathrace 2000, Carmageddon is a race to the death with 25 other demented maniacs through five different scenarios. Damaging an opponent wins credits, which can be spent auto-repairing your own car, neatly done in mid-flight by holding down a single key.

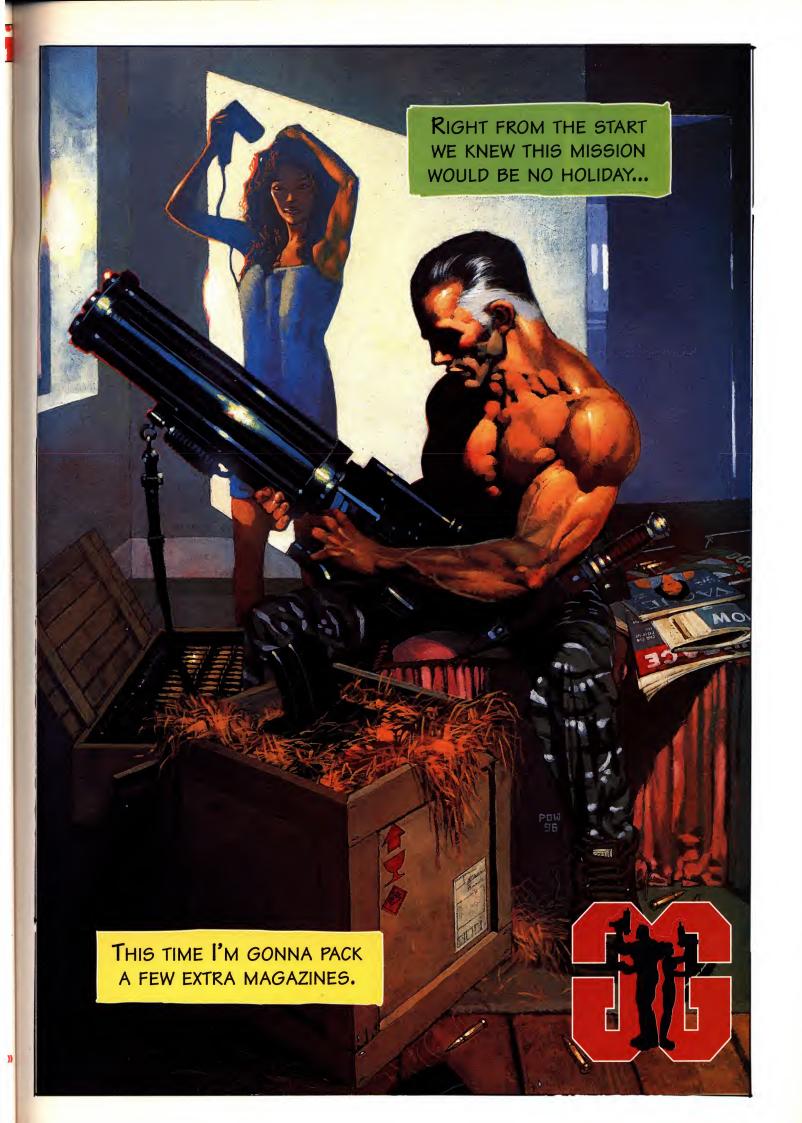
Because the developers are all ex-stock car racers, they've managed to put together an extremely realistic physics model for the cars, so that they move convincingly and damage in the correct manner when hit. The icing on the cake, though, is the video replay facility which is great for checking out all those pedestrians and cows that you splashed all

over the road just moments ago. In full gory detail. Carmageddon won't be released until March next year, but we've played an early version and it



looks like an absolute scream. We'll try and bring you a full preview next issue. Until then try http://www.sci.co.uk for further details.





Dispatches

**** Darkness Before Dawn**

Originally scheduled for a release unfortunately coincident with that of a slightly more high profile game beginning with *Q* (clue: not *Queen* - The Eye), Ocean's Dawn Of Darkness was understandably held back and is now set to rear its 3D first-person head in the form of a budget title. Whether its quality will be in keeping with this 'straight-to-video' style compromise remains to be seen, but the Manchester-based veterans promise a highly detailed, zombie-ridden affair with a horror movie ambience and an array of nifty features. Then again, it could be merely another Doom clone (can we call them Quake clones yet?).

All Dogz Go To Heaven



Is that the sound of a barrel being furiously scraped? Or is it the sound of cash tills humming as a shrewd marketing exercise successfully exploits a gullible user base? Whatever your level of cynicism, Oddballz is the third in the prolific Computer Petz series of animal-related novelty items from Mindscape. Following hot on the paws of Catz, and the equally descriptive Dogz, Oddballz represents a move away from the traditional domestic virtual animals, allowing the 'player' to nurture up to seven bizarre creatures, each capable of undergoing all manner of heinous mutations, the end results tradeable via the Internet, enabling enthusiasts to build up collections. Don't these people have anything better they could be getting on with?

🔗 P.Y.S.T? Keep It!

As far as terrible ideas go, a comic parody of a four-year-old adventure game must rank alongside Reliant Robins and prematurely balding singing drummers. But that's what you lucky punters can look forward to in the shape of Pyst (how we laughed), thanks to American company Palladium Interactive and UK distributor Omnimedia. Featuring the vocal talents of white trash guru John Goodman, of 'Roseanne' fame, it is intended to be an hilarious send-up of the best-selling milestone think 'em up Myst, with loads of humorous video and audio clips. In reality though, it will comprise ten customised screens whereby clicking on an object will result in something shit happening. Next.

Rugger Bugger
A joint development between Codemasters and Rage Software sees the New Zealand All-Blacks winger lending his name to the imaginatively titled Jonah Lomu Rugby. Featuring four light-sourced stadiums and an intelligent moving camera, there will be over 30 international teams and a variety of competitions available, including the World Cup. The game will feature some diverse climatic conditions (including lightning bolts), and, in keeping with the nature of the sport, there will also be an element of violence. To date, rugby has been a relatively unsuccessful game genre; they will be hoping that this effort hauls it out of the mire.

Cloak & Dagger

Still after that elusive number one hit, Sierra On-Line improve the odds with a couple of new announcements.

HE FIFTH INSTALMENT IN THE INSIPIDLY titled Quest For Glory series, Dragon Fire marks a change in direction from previous QFG point-

and-click adventures. the gaming world this time being rendered in full, real-time 3D. Dragon Fire takes place in the mythical world of Silmaria a land which basks in the glory of ancient Greece - so expect a game brimming with Gargoyles, Hydras and suchlike. Quest For Glory 5 sports an all new self-tuning difficulty level system and supports multiple players as well. It'll be out early next year, so watch out for more news soon.

Cloak, also due early next year from Sierra, sounds like an interesting new adventure game



in which the player assumes the role of a spy on an undercover mission to an alien planet. (Un)fortunately for the spy the aliens are telepathic, so the entire mission is carried out by a robot under his telepathic control. Sounds kinda cool.

For more information on Cloak or Dragon Fire point your Web browser at http://www.sierra.com. 7



Quest For Glory 5 sketch. Born under Leo?



with lots of gigantic mushrooms in it



Cloak. He's right at the end of the tunnel.



The bad guys in Cloak have advanced telepathic powers, it says here.

Gods of War

Completely over-the-top, totally brutal and looking fabulous already, War Gods from Williams deals a sucker punch from GT.

ar Gods From GT INTERACTIVE LOOKS SET TO DRIVE THE 3D BEAT 'em up genre in an overdrive of excess in February next year with its collection of inane characters and in-yer-face graphics. An amazing new digital skin texture-mapping technique, combined with the latest in motion captured animation, certainly impressed us when an early version came into the PC Zone office recently.



War Gods is a perfectly simple oneon-one fighting game set in an array of beautifully rendered arenas. The fighters themselves are stereotypically hard as nails, and



in the whole wide world! Only kidding

with names such as Warhead, Maximus, VooDoo and Anubis you'd expect them to be, wouldn't you? Mortal Kombat-style fatalities, tons of secret moves and multi-level combos will please fight fans, and a new 3D movement button (which allows the player to move around the entire fighting arena) should also please 'movement' fans also. For more information check out http://www.wargods.com. z



Dispatches

🤣 Bangin' Choons

Further evidence of the symbiotic relationship between the gaming and music industries, Virgin Records' Wipeout 2097 is a compilation dance album featuring tracks from the game by such fashionable artists as Future Sound Of London, Fluke, The Chemical Brothers, Photek, The Prodigy, Daft Punk, Orbital and Leftfield. The track 'Atom Bomb', by Fluke, will also shortly be released as a single. The album/game scenario is being promoted via a nationwide club tour, which promises to be a memorable audio-visual extravaganza including, in some cases, a huge Wipeout craft. The pick of the venues looks like being Liverpool's legendary Cream, featuring a live appearance by The Chemical Brothers. Large.

Food For Thought

Cranberry Source's forthcoming intergalactic shoot 'em up, QAD (the Quintessential Art of Destruction), is having the final touches applied with the musical input of DJ Food, a collaboration involving members of pioneering producers Coldcut, who had previously worked with Lisa Stansfield, Yazz and The Fall. A mixture of techno, dub, ambient and tribal, DJ Food's input should add greatly to the game's atmosphere. The highly-anticipated QAD is due for a February '97 release by Philips Media.

🔗 Bugger Rugger

More oval-balled action is pending from Alternative Software, with Pro Rugby providing a simulation of the sport of Rugby League, being the official game of the newly-founded Super League, and the more established RFL. Squads can be selected from the entire Super League, Divisions I and II, plus the Australian and International sides, and, in addition to real crowd noises, the game will feature full commentary from BSkyB's established duo of Mike 'Stevo' Stephenson and Eddie Hemmings.

Zed's Dead

The Bitmap Brothers' tongue-in-cheek military strategy game, Z, has justified its recent PC Zone review score of 92% by receiving a platinum award, representing over 300,000 sales since its end of August launch. The platinum disc was presented at London's Autumn ECTS by Dan Thompson, deputy managing director of publishers Warner Interactive International.

4AD3DCD

Yet another 3D game card has been added to an already flooded market with the announcement by Intergraph Computer Systems of Reactor, aimed specifically at gamesplayers. Naturally, it promises all sorts of graphical treats such as perspective correction, bilinear and trilinear filtering, gouraud shading, MIP mapping and antialiasing. How this one will differ wildly from any of the other available cards is hard to envisage though.

% Chess-on-line World of Adventures

The days of postal chess look to be numbered with the announcement of Mindscape's Chessmaster Online, an extension of the bestselling Chessmaster, which was recently updated as the largely well-received Chessmaster 5000. Keen chessnecks will now be able to play and communicate with their opponents in real time over the Internet for free. A downloadable beta version of the necessary software is available at

Shoot 'em up from Blue Byte

German developer Blue Byte move away from their traditional role as a strategy publisher by announcing a no-holds-barred 3D helicopter shoot 'em up.

WORK-IN-PROGRESS TITLE OF 3D HELICOPTER Shoot 'Em Up leaves little doubt as to what Blue Byte's latest announcement reveals. Yes, you get to fly helicopters around (above and below ground) and yes, you get to shoot lots of aliens as you fight off a massive invasion force.

Due for an early '97 release, 3D Heli Shooter (as it's thankfully been reduced to) unveils new polygon technology from Blue Byte, and apart from an odd pixellated landscape, it's already looking pretty fab.

Missions range from rescuing trapped scientists to destroying entire alien installations and there are numerous weapons systems available to achieve this. It has also been mentioned that the player is sometimes forced to leave the chopper to take on ground missions inside a tank.

For more info take a look at http://www.bluebyte.com. Z



sed by the aliens in 3D Heli Shooter. Shades of iD4 methinks.



Someone obviously took the wrong turning

Falling for it

Fallen Haven from Interactive Magic is a new turnbased strategy game of interstellar domination.



'S THE YEAR 2125. EARTH COLONY NEW HAVEN IS **UNDER ATTACK FROM an** irate race of hostile aliens

who've taken exception to your presence on 'their manor'. A fight ensues and a new game called Fallen Haven is, quite literally, born.

Interactive Magic have picked up Fallen Haven for release in the UK, and promise an involving mix of resource management and turn-based combat, also echoing elements of the classic X-Com series from MicroProse, Fallen Haven plumps for a hi-res isometric view.

Fallen Haven will hit the streets some time in February, but if you want more info now head to http://www.imagicgames.com. z

Drive like the wind

Fight while you race with Demon Driver from Philips Media.

ARIS-BASED HAIIKU STUDIOS, THE PEOPLE BEHIND DOWN IN THE DUMPS, HAVE A NEW FUTURISTIC ANIMEstyle hover bike racer in development scheduled for release early next year. Early indications are that Demon Driver is a zany, multi-coloured affair with a splash of outrageous courses and aggressive drivers, all of which you can choose to race with. A Japanese flavour permeates the many cut-scenes, and Haiiku are planning to work an adventure-style element into the game so that the player has more control over their character in-between races.

Demon Driver is will be released through Philips Media early next year. For more information contact http://www.philipsgames.com/low/games/details/demondriver_details.html. 7







Now that's what I call serious IBS (irritable bowel syndrome for those in the know).



Good Vibrations

Sit back and feel the vibrations with a new VR backpack that's causing a bit of a rumble here at *PC Zone*.

HE AURA INTERACTOR IS A 'FORCE FEEDBACK' gaming device that looks like something out of a 2000AD comic strip. Strap it onto your back, plug it into your sound card and

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the very first
time in the UK,
the thrill of
'virtual
bodily
harm'. Now
you can
actually
feel your
kidneys

slowly being knocked out as you play your favourite beat 'em up! Seriously though, it's totally safe, and a lot of fun too.

Powerful vibrations are generated from the backpack as explosions, gun shots and punches happen on your monitor. The whole thing works by responding to the bass sound waves present in all films, computer games and musical scores.

Wear it while listening to Beethoven's 'Fifth Symphony' or, better still, Tchaikovsky's '1812' complete with cannon, and you'll feel as if you've gone 12 rounds with Mike Tyson. But it works great with games, and the *Aura Interactor* has proven a big hit in the Us with some 1.4 million backpacks sold over the past year.

The Aura Interceptor normally retails at £69.99 (for more info call 0161 973 0505) and it'll work

on anything that has a headphone socket (from PCs to GameBoys), so you've no excuse not to want one. We have ten backpacks to give away to the same number of lucky readers. All you have to

do is answer the following question, send in your entry and hope you're picked out of the *PC Zone* competition barrel before anyone else.

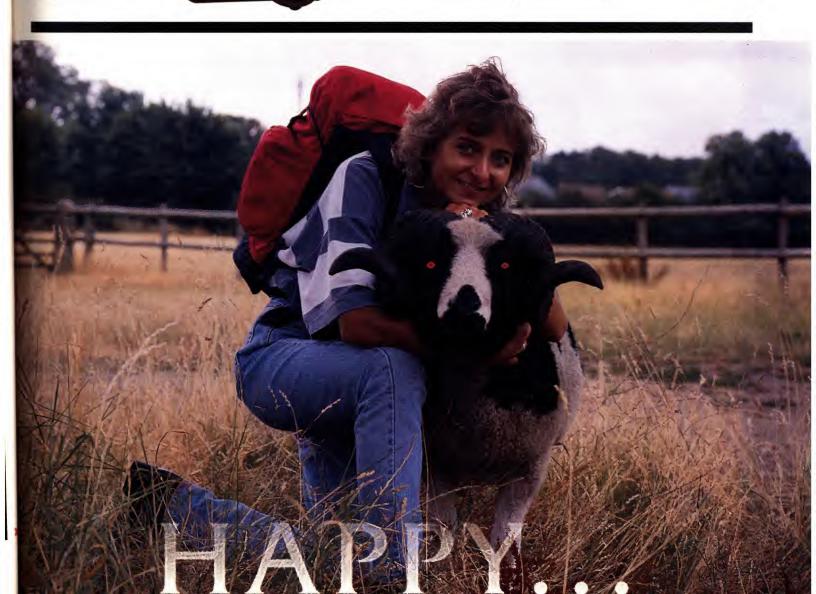
Question: How many *Aura Interactors* have been sold in the US?

- A. 13 million
- B. 1.4 million
- C. None

Answers on a postcard to:
Good Vibrations
PC Zone, CPZ612C,
Customer Interface, Bradley Pavilions
Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ

Rules

All entries to be received by December 20th 1996. The editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into, so don't even think about hassling us to see if you have won. Repeat entries will result in disqualification. Z



IN RUTELLA LUCE LA LUC

*HOTSHOTS

You've heard the latest, but you haven't seen much in the way of screenshots. Want to see more? Want to find out what all the fuss is about? *PC Zone* once again brings you all the latest shots, as they become available.

X-WING VS TIE FIGHTER (LUCASARTS)

Whether in single or network play mode, X-Wing vs TIE Fighter will ofter players a choice of more than 15 original mission scenarios set in a variety of familiar Star Wars environments, ranging from asteroid and space junk fields to the Endor star system.

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BLOOD & MAGIC (INTERPLAY)

Not too far off completion, Interplay's first AD&D licence *Blood & Magic* brings a real-time strategy, *C&C*-style flavour to the static RPG genre.

Early testing has revealed a huge potential in the game – its addictive qualities and stylish graphics raising our anticipation of the full review copy, which should be with us next issue.









DOMINION (7TH LEVEL)

"So Otto, my *Command & Conquer* cloning experiment hass vorked better zan I expected. Zis new specimen I shall call *Dominion*. It vill be set in ze far-flung future, and it vill feature a whole army of robots fighting it out amongst each ozzer. Furthermore, it shall be released through 7th Level at zee end of ze year... zat is, after I've finished ze CRANIAL EXTRACTION!"

GRAND THEFT AUTO (BMG)

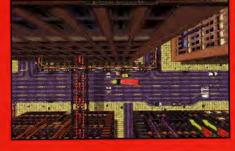
As mentioned last issue, DMA Design's Grand Theft Auto is sure to cause a ripple of controversy when it eventually sees the light of day. Promising "blood, blood, sticky clotted blood, runny blood and guts", the aim of the game is to become public enemy number one by hacking down cops and innocent bystanders in a variety of stolen cars.











PC CD ROM

soul hunt



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GAMETEK



ourprice

ne and amine admi Welcome to PC Zone's very own version of The Chart Show, sponsored by Our Price. Each month it'll feature not only the most up-to-date chart listing the Top Ten bestselling PC CD-ROM titles, but it will also play host to exclusive news and competitions.



COMMAND & CONQUER (RED ALERT) (Virgin) £32.99



FIFA '97







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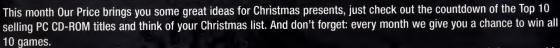
(Electronic Arts) £34.99



TIE FIGHTERS COLLECTORS

(Virgin) £14.99





In the No. 1 slot this month is Command & Conquer: Red Alert, the long-awaited sequel to Command & Conquer, which takes you back to a point in time before Command & Conquer - confused? Well, you may be, but it's a great game! It's also worth checking out some special Christmas deals and promotions in your local store, as a number of the games in the Our Price chart have some excellent added value deals on offer.

If you want to take part in this month's Our Price Top 10 prize giveaway, put pen to paper and answer the question below. Good luck! Send your entries to the usual address.

What is the name of the heroine in Core's Tomb Raider?

Rules & Restrictions: All entries must be received by 20 December 1996. No correspondence will be entered into - if you ring us up we'll subject you to vitriolic abuse before bunging you into the lions' cage at London Zoo. The Editor's decision is final and the winners will be notified by post. All other usual restrictions apply, so don't even think about it, okay?

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Liquid refreshment

Sub Culture and Aqua'Tak up next from Scorched Planet developer Criterion.

RIGHTON-BASED CRITERION SOFTWARE ARE A SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT team modelled on old school innovation and new school excellence. *Scorched Planet* fared well for a first release, so any follow-ups have a lot to live up to.

And indeed, Sub Culture and Aqua Tak look set to revel in a challenge as the possible successor. Funnily enough, both are set in water, but that's where the similarity between them ends. Aqua Tak is a watersled gunboat racing game with richly rendered courses and a wide choice of weapons, and Sub Culture is a submercifully painless exercise in underwater adventuring. So if you prefer messing about on the water with guns instead of microscopes, then the fast, high-res Aqua Tak will be more your sort of thing. On the other hand, those of us with more than just an itchy trigger finger will no doubt warm to the pipe-exploringly 'aquaspheric' (their joke, not mine) Sub Culture. Oh yes.

Both are due early in the new year, so Criterion still have plenty of time to sort 'em good. Until then, watch this space. Z





iF22-Lightning II

Heh, heh. That's funny... they put an 'l' in front of it.

OT ONE. NOT TWO. NOT THREE. NOT FOUR. BUT FIVE NEW F-22 GAMES will grace the PC from now until Easter. NovaLogic's F-22 Lightning II is reviewed this issue. Jetfighter III and Falcon 4 are due soon, as is DID's possibly brilliant effort. Is there really room for another F-22 game? Interactive Magic think so, and we think they have a point.

Their F-22 game uses something called the Demon-1 Terrain System, a rather ominously titled graphic effect which matches photo-realistic satellite imagery with 'real life' terrain elevations. From what we've seen we're impressed – landscapes like these are to worship, and, for all you 'real' flight fans out there, we can report that the 'flight model' feels real good too.

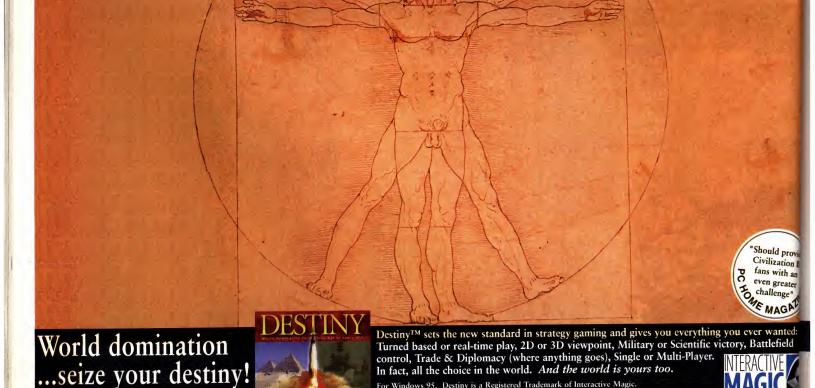
iF-22 Lightning II has been put together by a team that had full access to a real F-22 and all of its flight data during the development of the game, so we're expecting nothing less than a miracle out of them in February when it comes out.

For more Interactive Magic tricks, try http://www.imagicgames.com. 7





How long would it take you to get him into a spacesuit?

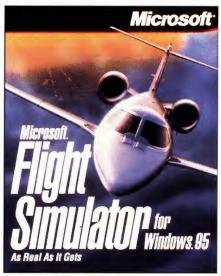


For Windows 95. Destiny is a Registered Trademark of Interactive Magic. Windows is a Registered Trademark of Microsoft Corporation

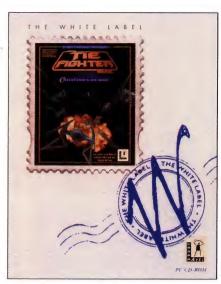
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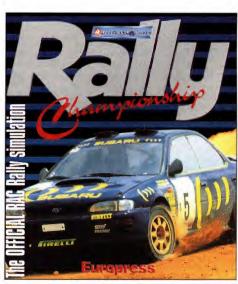
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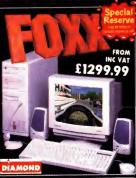


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ZOOL, LOTUS 3, NIGEL MANSELL 9.99 .25 TRACING 97 . 33 49 .66 HARDBALL 5 SV/8MB 28.99 .611 HARDLINE 28.99 .611 HARDLINE 28.99 .611 HARDLINE 28.99 .611 HARDLINE 28.99 .611 HELPI COMPILATION UNE 2, PRINCE OF PERSIA, PUSH OVER, PRO TENNIS TOUR, PINBALL DREAMS, HUMANS, FI PACKED, EACH OF THE MERCAL PRO TENNIS TOUR, PINBALL DREAMS, HUMANS, FI PACKED, LEADERBOARD GOLF, SUPER VGA HARRIER, SHERLOCK HOLMES & JA.99 .610 HAVE NO MOUTH BUT I MUST SCREAM 31.99 .613 IAN BOTHAM'S CRICKET 97 8MB 31.99 .68 INCREDIBLE HULK - THE PANTHEON SAGA 29.99 .615 INDY CAR RACING 2 87% 14.99 .620 ITS A FUNNY OLD GAME 8MB 22.99 .615 JOHN MADDEN NFL 97 SV/8MB 31.99 .613 JOHN RAVEN 12.99 .627 KINGS QUEST 10.64 KINGS QUEST 10.65 LEISURE SUIT LARRY 6 .12.99 .627 LEISURE SUIT LARRY 6 .12.99 .627 LEISURE SUIT LARRY 7 8MB .12.99 .627 LEISURE SUIT LARRY 6 .12.99 .627 LEISURE SUIT LARRY 7 8MB .12.99 .627 LEISURE SUIT LARRY 7 8MB .12.99 .627 LEISURE SUIT LARRY 7 8MB .12.99 .627 LEISURE SUIT LARRY 6 .12.99 .627 LEISURE SUIT LARRY 7 8MB .12.99 .627 LEISURE SUIT LARRY 7 8MB .12.99 .627 LEISURE SUIT LARRY 7 8MB .12.99 .627 LINKS 386 PRO 8MB .12.99 .625 LINK 158 976 WINDOWS 95 .19.99 .657 LINK 158 946 WINDOWS 95 .19.99 .657 LORD OF THE REALM 2 8MB/SV .22.99 .677	GREMLIN	COMPI	LATION VO)L 1				-
HELPI COMPILATION DURE 2, PRINCE OF PERSIA, PUSH OVER, PRO TENNIS TOUR, PINBALL DREAMS, HUMANS, F1 PACIFICA, LEADERBOAND GOLF, SUPER VGA HARRIER, SHERLOCK HOLMES & 14,99 £20 LEADERBOAND GOLF, SUPER VGA HARRIER, SHERLOCK HOLMES & 14,99 £20 LEADERBOAND EAST OF THE PACIFICATION OF	ZOOL, LO	TUS 3, 1	NIGEL MAN	ISELL	,	9.99	£25	00
HELPI COMPILATION DURE 2, PRINCE OF PERSIA, PUSH OVER, PRO TENNIS TOUR, PINBALL DREAMS, HUMANS, F1 PACIFICA, LEADERBOAND GOLF, SUPER VGA HARRIER, SHERLOCK HOLMES & 14,99 £20 LEADERBOAND GOLF, SUPER VGA HARRIER, SHERLOCK HOLMES & 14,99 £20 LEADERBOAND EAST OF THE PACIFICATION OF	GT RACII HARDBAI	NG '97 LL 5 SV/8	BMB			33.49 28.99	£6	C
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INCREDIBLE HULK - THE PANTHEON SAGA 20.90	HEXAGO	N CARTE	EL 8MB/SV			34.99	£10	RI
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NING'S QUEST 1 TO 6	JOHN MA	DDEN N	FL 97 SV/8	MB		31.99	£13	S
NING'S QUEST 1 TO 6	KINGDON	VEN	SIC			12.99 29.99	£27	SI
NING'S QUEST 1 TO 6	KINGS QI	UEST 7				11.99	£1	SI
LEISURE SUIT LARRY 7 8MB 32.99 £7 LEISURE SUIT LARRY COLLECTION VERSIONS 1 TO 5 17.99 £17 LINKS 386 PRO 8MB 12.99 LINKS LINKS 396 PRO 8MB 32.99 £2 LION KING FOR WINDOWS 95 19.99 £2 LOR LOR FOR WINDOWS 95 19.99 £2 LOR DOF THE REALM 2 8MB/SV 32.99 £7	KINGS Q	UESTCC	JELECTION	٧ .				SI
LEISURE SUIT LARRY COLLECTION VERSIONS 1 TO 5	LEISURE	SUIT LA	RRY 6			12.99	£2	SI
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LION KING FOR WINDOWS 95	LINKS 38	6 PRO 8	мв			12.99	600	SI SI
LORDS OF MIDNIGHT SMR	LION KIN	G FOR W	VINDOWS	95		19.99	£5	SI
LOTIDO OF MIDINIGHT OND	LORDS C	F MIDNI	GHT 8MB	√SV .		32.99 22.99	£17	. 50
M.A.X 8MB/SV	M.A.X 8M	B/SV				31.99	. 68	
MAGIC CARPET + DATA DISK	MAGIC C	ARPET +	DATA DIS	K	E 019/	13.99	£3	S
	MANIC K	ARTS 85	%	1 44114 9		12.99	£7	E

3	OCK BOTTOM	- 1	PR	ICES INCLUDE V	/A			
	MASTER OF ORION 2	.30.99	£14	SPUD FOR WINDOWS 95	.26.49	£13		~
	MCLAREN AT LE MANS BMD/SV	34.99	£5 £8	SPYCRAFT SV/8MB	7.99	£7	å	
	MDK 8MB/SV	31.99	£18 £6	STAR TREK - DEEP SPACE NINE SV/8MB STAR TREK - KLINGON SV/8MB	29.99 .	£15		bec
	MECHWARRIOR 2 DATA DISK SV/8MB MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS 8MB/SV MONSTER TRUCKS MORTAL KOMBAT 2	.31.99	£13	STAR TREK - KLINGON SV/8MBSTAR TREK 2 - JUDGEMENT RITESSTONE KEEP	.12.49	£16		
	MORTAL KOMBAT 2	9.99	£35	STRIKE COMMANDER	7.99	£7		ese
	MORTAL KOMBAT 2 MORTAL KOMBAT 3 8MB 90% MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY 8MB/SV MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY 8MB/SV MS FI IGHT SIMUL ATOR 6 FOR WIN 95	31.99	£13 £6	STRIKER 95 70%	8.99 .	£36		Live a h
	MS FLIGHT SIMULATOR 6 FOR WIN 95 MUMMY 8MB	.36.99	£13 £8	SUPER EF2000 8MB	.34.99	£10	SNO	cial.reser
	NASCAR 2 8MB/SV	.26.99	£13	SUPER STREETFIGHTER 2 TURBO SYNDICATE WARS SV/8MB 92%	.37.99	£12	spe	CIMILIESEI
	NAVY STRIKE 86%	12.99	£21	TACTCOM - EF2000 DATA DISK SV/8MB .	.27.49 .	£1		
	NEED FOR SPEED SE SV/8MB 78% NET ZONE FOR WINDOWS 95 NIHILIST 8MB/SV	.26.49	£13	TEAM F1 (POLE POSITION) 8MB	.29.99	£10	_	
	NORMALITY INC. SV/8MB 87%	.25.99	£19	TELSTAR PACK VOL5 MEGARACE & BLOODNET	.14.99	£25	-	
	NOVASTORM			TEMPTATION			AND DESCRIPTION OF	
	OVER 300 LEVELS FOR DUKE NUKEM 3D OFFENSIVE	28 99	611	7TH GUEST, INDY CAR + DATA DISK, HAND OF FATE, LANDS OF LORE	29 99	£15	1000	Paper Political
,	OLYMPIC GAMES OLYMPIC SOCCER PANDORA DIRECTIVE	.25.99	£14					
	PANDORA DIRECTIVE	24.99	£15	TERMINATOR - FUTURE SHOCK 92%	.30.99	£9		1000
	PGA EURO TOUR GOLF 96 SV/8MB 91% PGA TOUR GOLF	33.99	£21 £7	TERMINATOR - SKYNET 8MB/SV	.11.99	£1		OVER
	PGA TOUR GOLF 96 GOLD SV/8B	.33.99	£21	THEME HOSPITAL 8MB	32.99 . 13.99	£12		
	PGA TOUR GOLF 96 DATA DIS	KS	£6	THEME PARK THEXDER FOR WINDOWS 95 THIS MEANS WAR SV/8MB 82%	.26.99	£8		PEOI
	SAWGRASS DATA DISK SV/8MB SPANISH BAY DATA DISK SV/8MB	.18.99	£6					JOINE
	NIPPENBURG DATA DISK SV/8MB	.18.99		THUNDER OFFSHORE 8MB/SV	.11.99	£5		RE
	PHANTASMAGORIA 2 8MB/SV	.27.99	£17	TIE FIGHTER COLLECTION			9	WE AF
	PICTURE PERFECT GOLF PINBALL CONSTRUCTION KIT PINBALL ILLUSIONS 83%	.24.49	£20 £15	TIE FIGHTER + DATA DISKS 92%				LEADE
	PINBALL WORLD	.27.99	£17	TIE FIGHTER VS X-WING SV/8MB TIME COMMANDO 8MB	.31.99 .	£13 £18		ORD
	POLICE QUEST - S.W.A.T POWER HOUSE	.14.99	£14	TIME COMMANDO 8MB TOM CAT ALLEY PENT/9MB TOMB RAIDER 8MB/SV TOONSTRUCK SV/8MB TOTAL MANIA 70%	.22.99	£7	85 =	CON
	POWER, LIES & CORRUPTION			TOONSTRUCK SV/8MB	.32.99	£12		
	UFO, F14 FLEET DEFENDER, DUNE 2, BENEATH THE STEEL SKY	.19.99	£15				30	CHECK
	PREMIER MANAGER 3 + EDITOR	.12.99	£22	TRACER TRANSPORT TYCOON SV	.19.99 .	£10		COLOU
	PRISONER OF ICE SV	.16.99	£3	TRANSPORT TYCOON + EDITOR SV 90%	16.99			MAGA
	PRO PINBALL SV/8MB 90%	.23.99	£11	TUNNEL B1	.30.99 .		Ag	AMAZ
	RAC RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP	.29.99 .	£15 £16	ULTIMATE DOOM (15) SV 90%	.12.99	£4		SHOP
	RAILROAD TYCOON DELUXE	.12.99	£4	ULTIMATE DOOM (15) SV 90%	.22.99	£7		INTERN
	PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING BMB/SV PRO PINBALL SVØMB 90% QUAKE SVØMB/PENT 95% RAC RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP RAIL ROAD TYCOON DELUXE RAMA 8MB/SV RAYMAN 86%	.28.99	£16	LIS NAVY FIGHTERS	14 99	£15	10/	special.
	RE-LOADED SV/8MB	.24.99		VAMPIRE THE MASQUERADE	.33.99	26		special.
	RESERVE DOUBLE PACK VOL 1			VAMPIRE THE MASQUERADE VIPER VIRTUA COP PENT/8MB	.25.99	£9	0	0.00-
	RYDER CUP AND ARCHER MCLEAN'S PO	OL4.99	£15	VIRTUA FIGHTER PENT/8MB 90%	.25.99	£9 £25		ı 9.30a
	RESERVE DOUBLE PACK VOL 2 688 ATTACK SUB AND			VOYEUR 2 SV/8MB	.29.49	£10	(10am	to 5pm
	CHUCK YEAGERS AIR COMBAT	4.99	£15	WAR ZONE PACK HARPOON CLASSIC, STARSHIP,				10
	CAR & DRIVER AND STORVICK	4.99	£15	NO GREATER GLORY, PACIFIC ISLANDS,				12
	RESERVE DOUBLE PACK VOL 4			WARCRAFT 2 81%				
	F29 RETALIATOR AND HEROES OF THE 357TH	4 99	615	WARCRAFT 2 DATA DISKS			60	
	RESERVE DOUBLE PACK VOL 5	4.00 .		- BEYOND THE DARK PORTAL	18 00	66		
	ROBOCOP 3 AND DUNE	4.99 .	£15	WARHAMMER - HORNED RAT WIN 95	.28.99 .	£16		e card o
	INDY 500 AND WING COMMANDER	4.99	£15	WHITE LINES COLLECTION SUPER KARTS, F1 GRAND PRIX AND				subject
	RETURN FIRE FOR WIN 95 SV/8MB 79%	.29.99	£10	INDY CAR + TRACKS SV/8MB	.14.99 .	£15	Please	phone
	RETURN TO KRONDOR 8MB/SV	.30.99	£9	WILLIAMS ARCADE GREATEST CONTAINS DEFENDER, ROBOTRON, BUB	BLES		We are	mainly ma
	RIPPER (18)	29 99	620	JOUST, DEFENDER 2 (STARGATE), SINIS	ΓAR	00	have	mpressive
	SAMPRAS EXTREME TENNIS 8MB/SV SCORCHED PLANET 8MB/SV	.31.99 .	£13	AND PROGRAMMER INTERVIEWS			which	stock our
				WIPEOUT 92%	.19.99 .	£25	C	lub Sho
	SCREAMER 2 8MB/SV SCREAMER 90% SEGA RALLY PENT/8MB SETTLERS 2 92%	9.99	010	WIPEOUT 2	9.99	8	CHE	ELMS
	SETTLERS 2 92%	.26.99 .	£12	WORLD CUP YEAR 94				roomfie
	SHADOAN 8MB	.29.99	£5	GOAL, SENSIBLE SOCCER, CHAMPIONSH MANAGER 94 + DATA DISK, STRIKER	IIP 6,99	£28	Che	elmsford
	SIM CITY 2000 ANNIVERSARY SV	.33.99 .	£16	WORLD RALLY FEVER	.19.99 .	£15	Around the	corner fro
	SIM CITY 2000 NETWORKS 8MB/SV	.25.99	£14	WORMS + REINFORCEMENT DATA DISK WORMS REINFORCEMENTS DATA CD	26.99	£8	SAWE	BRIDG
	SIM CLASSICS COLLECTION	00.00	044	WORMS UNITED 8MB	.25.99	£9	The Mai	tings, St
	SIM FARM, SIM EARTH, A-TRAIN			X-COM - APOCALYPSE X-COM - TERROR FROM THE DEEP	.30.99 .	£14 £26		oridgewo
	SIM ISLE 8MB	.24.99 .	£10	X-COM COMPILATION			not far fro	m the M11,
	SIMON THE SORCERER DELUXE			X-COM TERROR FROM THE DEEP AND UI UNKNOWN PLUS TWO HINT BOOKS	O ENE!	MY £4		BRIS
	SIMON 1 & 2			X-MEN CHILDREN OF THE ATOM				Glouces
	SONIC 3 & KNUCKLES PENT/8MB	.22.99	£7	X-WING COLLECTION				orfield, Save, oppo
	SPACE HULK - VOTBA WIN 95 SV/8MB 869	634.99	£15	X-WING, B-WING, IMPERIAL PURSUIT + 6 NEW LEVELS	14.99			save, oppos s bought in
	SPORTS MASTERS PGA GOLF, INDY 500, ADVANTAGE TENNI	S,		z	.31.99	£13	£1 surch	arge on the
	EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS 1992	6.99 .	£28	ZORK NEMESIS	.31.99 .	£18		
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SPUD FOR WINDOWS 95 .26.49 £13 SPYCRAFT SV/8MB .29.99 £20 SSN SEAWOLEF .799 .£7 STAR TREK - DEEP SPACE NINE SV/8MB 29.99 £15 STAR TREK - KLINGON SV/8MB 31.99 £13
STAR TREK 2 - JUDGEMENT RITES .12 49 STONE KEEP .33 49 .516 STRIKE COMMANDER 7.99 .67 STRIKE R95 70% 4.99 .225 SUB WAR 2050 8.99 .256 SUB WAR 2050 8.99 .256
SPYCRAFT SV/8MB 29.99 £20 SSN SEAWOLF 7.99 £7 STAR TREK - DEEP SPACE NINE SV/8MB 29.99 £15 STAR TREK - KLINGON SV/6MB 3.199 £13 STAR TREK 2 - JUDGEMENT RITES 12.49 STONE KEEP 33.49 £16 STRIKE COMMANDER 7.99 £7 STRIKE STO'9 4.99 £25 SUB WAR 2050 8.99 £36 SUPER EF2000 MB 3.499 £10 SUPER STREETFIGHTER 2 TURBO 14.99 £25 SYNDICATE WARS SV/8MB 92% 37.99 £12 SYNDICATE WARS SV/8MB 51.399 £17 TACTCOM - EF2000 DATA DISK SV/8MB 13.99 £10 TELSTAR PACK VOL5 TELSTAR PACK VOL5 \$10 \$10
TELSTAR PACK VOL5 MEGARACE & BLOODNET14.99£25
TEMPTATION 7TH GUEST, INDY CAR + DATA DISK, HAND OF FATE, LANDS OF LORE29.99£15
TERMINAL VELOCITY 8MB
TFX 11.99 £1 THEME HOSPITAL 8MB 32.99 £12 THEME PARK 13.99 £3 THEXDER FOR WINDOWS 95 26.99 £8
THUNDER OFFSHORE 8MB/SV24.99£1 THUNDER HAWK 2 - FIRESTORM 90%11.99£1
TIE FIGHTER COLLECTION TIE FIGHTER + DATA DISKS 92%14.99
TIE FIGHTER VS X-WING SV/8MB 31.99 £13 TIME COMMANDO 8MB 31.99 £18 TOM CAT ALLEY PENT/8MB 22.99 £7 TOMB RAIDER 8MB/SV 34.99 £15 TOONSTRUCK SV/8MB 32.99 £12
TOTAL MANIA 70%
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COMPETITION 🍑

Cross a tank with a PC and what do you get? iM1A2 Abrams from Interactive Magic - that's what.

MAGINE, IF YOU WILL, THE INSIDE OF A TANK DURING COMBAT. CRAMPED, noisy, bumpy – you can't even sit down without getting grease and oil all over your backside. There's the driver screaming that he can't see where he's going, the navigator shouting down instructions, and the gunner fumbling with live shells behind you. No siree, you wouldn't get me inside one of those.

I, like so many other people out there, prefer my tank action simulated. Give me a comfy chair, a fast PC, 20 smokes and a steaming cuppa and I'll take on anyone head-to-head in a tank.

The gaming equivalent is much less stressful and certainly more fun than the real thing.

Which I'm thankful of, seeing as I'm off for a spin in Interactive Magic's

new tank warfare sim iM1A2 Abrams. No live shells, no screaming navigators, just tons of realism and an accurate overview of the technologically advanced A2 Abrams battle tank - all assembled using the latest in 3D polygon graphics.

As you read this, iM1A2 Abrams is currently being deployed throughout the country for its imminent UK release. In celebration of this, PC Zone is giving away a brand new ninja-tastic PC to the person who can answer the following question and impress us all with a tie-breaker.



Please circle your answer, cut out this coupon and send your entries to:

Tank of a PC, PC Zone, CPZ612A, Customer Interface, Bradley Pavillions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ.

OUESTION:

Which of the following is not a tank?

A) Sherman

B) Panzer C) Chieftain

D) Daisy

TIE-BREAKER:

Complete the following sentence using your mind:

"If I had a tank I would...

Name:

Job Titie:

Company:

Address:

Postcode:

Daytime phone number:

RULES:

All entries to be received by December 20th 1996. The editor's decision is final. Ten runners-up get a copy of iM1A2 Abrams. No correspondence will be entered into. Repeat entries will result in disqualification. There is no cash alternative. Proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of receipt. Persons involved in this promotion and execution of the draw, employees of Dennis Publishing and Interactive Magic are not eligible for entry.



DETAILS:

One lucky reader will walk away with: Intel Pentium 133MHz

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she really wants it



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of the underworld.

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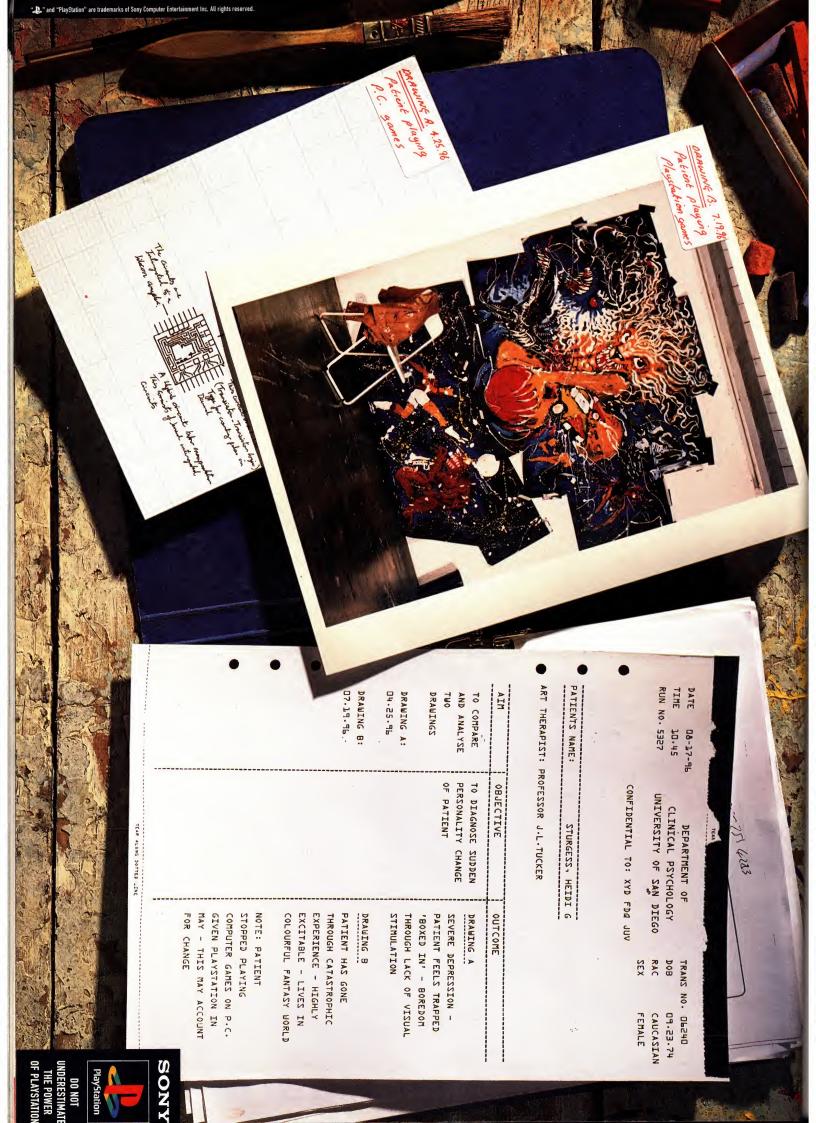


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At home with... Rage

We sent Charlie Brooker off for a quick nose around one of Rage Software's five development sites. We didn't tell him it would involve a visit to Birmingham. We are evil. We are truly, truly evil.

HEN YOU'RE A GAMES JOURNO, PART OF YOUR 'JOB' (IF you can call it that with a straight face) is to visit software houses and take a look at what they're working on. Now, I've done this a fair few times and there's usually a sort of routine that occurs. Here's what happens each time *I* go on a little 'visit':

8.00am Alarm clock goes off. Wake blearily from slumber.
Shoo bison from bed. Wipe drool from pillow. Hit 'snooze' button.

8.15am Alarm goes off again. Hit 'snooze' button.
8.30am Snooze button time again. This continues until...

9.15am Slowly it dawns upon you: you're going to be *late*.

9.30am Hit street, running. Still brushing teeth and pulling jacket on. Hail cab, making mental note to keep the receipt for expenses.

9.40am Slump silently in seat as cab driver indulges in lengthy bigoted diatribe against the rest of the world/attempts lightweight 'matey' conversation/ drives over small child's head (delete where applicable).

9.55am Arrive at station. Raid John Menzies for pens and notepad (having forgotten them this morning), dictaphone batteries, crisps, What Bison? Magazine, etc. Catch train.

10.30am Halfway to destination, realise that you've lost the cab receipt already.

11.00am Stumble off train. Catch cab number two.11.07am Slump silently in seat as cab driver number two mimics the actions of cab driver number one, on

mimics the actions of cab driver number one, only for less money and with a comedy accent (i.e. not a London one). 11.15am Arrive at Software House. Gratefully accept cup of

coffee from incredibly helpful PR person. For the remainder of the day, they will act as your butler.

12.30pm Break for lunch. PR person takes you (and a couple of programmers, who haven't been outside for six

months) to local eaterie. Safe in the knowledge that 1) it's all on their expense account, and 2) no-one's going to argue with you, you set about ordering the most expensive item on the menu (ie. a steak the size of Canada). And a couple of side dishes. And then some beers.

Er, wait a minute. Hold it right there.







(Top) Trash It! The owner of 'Spag' is quite, quite insane.

(Above and above right) Those *Trash It!* designers have spent months poring over such visuals as these.

(All below) Space craft, Big Vac with Cheese, pumpkinhead and a bolt from the blue. Trash It! is chock full of surprises.

Welcome to Birmingham

It's at this point in the proceedings where my day at Rage Software begins to differ from the pre-ordained routine. Instead of forcing me to accompany him to a nearby restaurant and fill me with hot food and cold, hard sales talk, Rage honcho Trevor Williams merely offers me a 'butty', a can of coke, and some crisps. And oddly enough, it's exactly what I wanted. He's a refreshingly down-to-earth bloke without an ounce of smarm about him, and as he shows me around Rage's Midlands office, I'm struck by the relaxed, friendly air of the place. Perhaps that's something to do with the security that being a public limited company brings - Rage can afford to take their time over development. And for proof of that, you need look no further than Trash It!, an unremittingly surreal arcade game they're currently developing for the PC.

Trash It! is completely off its tits. It's insane. If it were a person, it'd be found wandering the streets, wearing an overcoat three sizes too large, a monocle and suspenders,











HROUGH THE KEYHOLE

(Above) *Jonah Lomu Rugby*; developed by Rage, out soon through Codemasters.

(Above right) Jonah Lomu, with odd-shaped halls shouting, "Where is my biro? My biro is King" at passers-by. (Your dad does that, doesn't he? – Ed.)
The storyline, which displays scant respect for reason or coherence, revolves around an evil professor who plans to turn the entire universe into a sugarcube. Your task, therefore, is to smash loads of stuff up with hammers. Not just any old hammers, mind. Some of them turn into missiles and stuff. Oh, and there's also loads of cakes in it (see panel).

You're probably having difficulty following me, so I'll cut to the chase: it looks excellent. Imagine a deranged blend of *Worms*, *Rampage* (the one where you smash up buildings with giant monsters), *Super Mario Bros*, and er, *Lost Vikings* and you'll be pretty near the mark. The action is viewed from a side-on perspective, with the camera effortlessly zooming in and out when necessary. One look at the lunatic lead character belting the bejesus out of everything with his bloody big hammer and you'll be itching for a go. Graphically, it's very impressive, with mucho rendered-sprite action and some genuinely *stunning* cut-scenes (the work of a man with "a constant stream of LSD dripping into his *eye*", according to one team member); it oozes quality.

From what I've seen of the levels themselves, the gameplay itself should match up easily. Deceptively complex, it's patently the work of a diseased mind. In fact, Trash It's level designers are madmen. No, really. Maniacs. If I were a Daily Mail reader, I'd have performed a citizen's arrest on them there and then, on suspicion of substance abuse. They're animated, enthusiastic, and they sit around a desk liberally peppered with some of the coolest 'stuff' I've ever seen. When you eventually get to play the game itself, bear in mind that you're at the mercy of people who own boxing puppets with Mr T's head on them. I want one.

The *Trash It!* team seem quietly confident that their labour of love is set to make waves in the gaming world. And on the face of it, we may be looking at something of a tsunami.

Not only but also

The Birmingham office is but one of Rage's five – count 'em, five – development bases, scattered around the UK. Naturally, you'd expect them to be working on more than one title at a time. And indeed they are. The Brummie team's just finished *Striker 96*, are starting work on a 3D *Speedball-style* sports game (working title 'Deadball Zone'),

(Below right) No it isn't the official *War of the Worlds* game, which you will be pleased to know, Rage are working on.

(Below centre) Rage's very own 3D space shooter *Darklight* looks particulary cake-tastic.

(Below) *Darklight* proves that bright, gaudy colours really do work in space.







ROB MANN*
ZAF QAMAR*
LEE SEABRIDGE*
JOHN COURT*
JON CURTIS*
DAVE CLARKE*
MARK HULA*
ANDY TAYLOR*

TEAM LEADER
PROGRAMMER
ARTIST
ARTIST
PROGRAMMER
PROGRAMMER

* obviously a lunatic...

and they're also turning their hand to Jonah Lomu Rugby, one of the few computerised simulations of everybody's favourite rough 'n' tumble ball game. The latter is nearing completion, and looks like it should satiate the Carling in just about everyone. More on that when we get it.

Other titles currently in development at Rage's other bases include Darklight (an Elite-like cosmos-ripper), Intersection (racing), and an official War Of The Worlds game

(for which Jeff Wayne is currently penning some new tracks). Having the overall output split between five different bases is a huge plus, reckons Trevor, since it encourages an air of friendly competition between teams. Judging by the evidence on display here, it's hard to disagree.

Cakes: the return

I've said it before, and I'll say it again: there aren't enough *cakes* in today's videogames. Consider the following arcade legends: *Pac-Man, Bubble Bobble* and *Rainbow Islands*. What do they have in common? They're old, they're Japanese... and most important of all, *they reward you with cake*. Loads of different kinds, too – from weedy-looking doughnuts to gigantic artery-clogging gateaux. Today's lacklustre releases are alarmingly dessert-free. There's rarely so much as a profiterole.

Which is why I was thrilled silly to see that Rage are reviving the old pastry-in-games tradition by making heavy use of lip-smacking iced buns in *Trash It!*. Mind you, they're dangerous. In fact, they're 'proximity buns', which explode whenever you get too near, so you never actually get to eat one. Still, they've got the right idea. And to ensure that the other companies follow suit, I want all of you – even the ones without *fingers* – to cut out this mini-petition and send it to the software developer of your choice. **Z**

BRING BACK THE CAKE!!!

I, the undersigned, am shocked and disgusted by the shameful lack of cakes, sweets, and snacks in your product line. Surely you could find room in *one* of your programs for a chocolate sponge? Or a mouthwatering éclair? Even a small rum truffle would do. What's the *matter* with you people? Are you *stupid* or something? Put more cake in your games NOW, or I'll come round and stab you *all*. With a screwdriver. I mean it — *watch your backs*.

Jigilot



"Three fantastic games If you only buy one game

"One of the most expansive and explosive action titles to date."

PlayStation Magazine



RUN, SHOOT, & DRIVE THROUGH

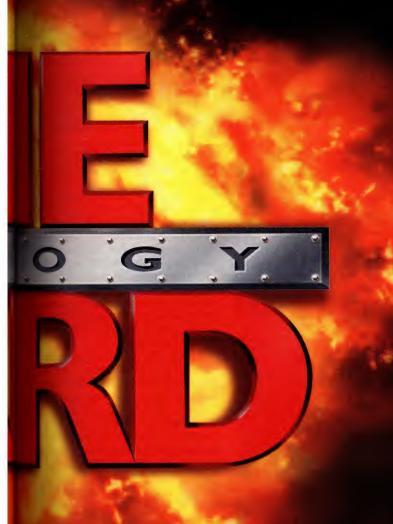
Die Hard



Die Hard 2: Die Harder



wrapped up in one package. this year, make this it." Games Master (Aug 96)



"Technically superb,
graphically excellent and
engrossing in the extreme,
this is one of the few
"must have" PlayStation
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French developers Mindscape Bordeaux (the French division of Mindscape UK, believe it or not) are working on

(Bottom right)
"Toucheth me not, or I'll poketh thine eyes out, varlet!"

happens to be one of the most beautiful and technically impressive games we have seen for a very, very long time.

French savvy

Only the French seem capable of effortlessly producing computer games with visuals so stunning that they have people gawping in amazement at their screens. Maybe they're just more openminded about what they want to create at the outset. Maybe they just don't give a shit about the unspoken 'rules' for creating believable characters in RPGs. Or maybe it's high time we all accepted the fact that artistically, they're light years ahead of their contemporaries.

Unfortunately, more often than not, the gameplay in these French visual masterpieces falls by the wayside. It's almost as though the developers simply assume that the visual splendour of their creations is enough in itself to carry the game, and so don't exactly push the boat out when the game gets to the design stage. The only notable exception to this rule (well, the only ones that spring to mind) is Adeline, creators of *Little Big Adventure*, which sports gorgeous graphics and intensely addictive gameplay.

All this is about to change with the arrival of *Dark Earth*. From what we saw at the show, the amazing graphics (just check out the screen shots) will be more than matched by gripping, addictive gameplay, with the obligatory 'engrossing' plot holding the whole thing together. We're really putting our necks on the block with this one we know (er, it's nowhere near being finished yet, for example) but believe us, if you'd seen it running, as we have,



HE EUROPEAN COMPUTER TRADE SHOW (OR ECTS as those 'in the know' call it) was something of an eye-opener for all the journalists who attended it. Software publishers use the show as a platform for all their fab new products.

Usually, most of the products aren't particularly fab, and we hardly ever get

what could turn out to be one of the biggest games of

next year. Chris Anderson

for the next few months to

keep an eye on how the

game's developing.

will be following them about

particularly fab, and we hardly ever get to see something we didn't already know about before the

show. This year, however, we went and had a quick peek at the games on the Mindscape stand, and ended up hanging around for about 45 minutes with our eyes positively glued to a computer screen, despite the fact we had pressing appointments elsewhere. You see, we came across a game called *Dark Earth*, which just







you'd be left in no doubt as to the enormous potential this game has.

Please explain

Try to imagine one of the better-looking RPGS (Ultima VIII, for example) with the graphics improved about a million times, a combat system re-worked so the player really feels he's taking part in a genuine scrap, an interface so intuitive and easy to use that the player hardly knows it's there, characters that are so realistically animated that even their facial features and expressions bear a spooky resemblance to their real-life counterparts (i.e. us) and all this in a playing world so vast that you could easily get lost in it. Such are the delights of Dark Earth, a game Mindscape are convinced will take the traditional RPG mould and turn it into something shiny and new. For this, the

first in a thrilling two part *Dark Earth* Diary (exclusive to *PC Zone*), I'll be introducing you to the *Dark Earth* universe, an enormous fantasy world with 50 locations and 80 characters to interact with, each with their own part to play in the great scheme of things. But first, le scenario...

Alone in the Dark (Earth)

The game takes place three centuries into the future on our very own planet Earth, except in the extremely unlikely event that you live long enough to find out how things are going to work out in the far future, you probably won't recognise the place at all. This is down to a rather unfortunate incident in which Earth has a very close shave when a gigantic comet pops by for a visit, showering the place with hundreds of deadly meteorites. This has

If You Go Down To The Woods Tonight...

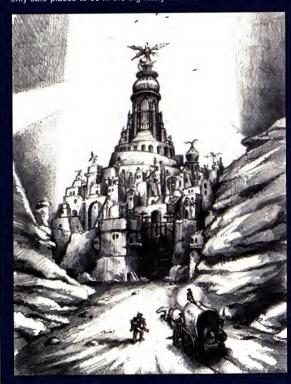
...a big scary bloke like this one here will give you lots of grief. The areas outside the Stallites are known as the Darklands. Only a complete buffoon would venture into the Darklands without an enormous pointy sword. Tales have been told of the dark, dangerous creatures that dwell in these parts. There are also rumours of fortresses inhabited by violent nutters. If you really feel the need to travel from one Stallite to another, try and find a mini-cab firm that will do you a good deal on a return trip (Er, I don't

think so somehow - Ed.)



No Place Like Home

Certain parts of *Dark Earth* are marked by great beams of light. What with it being dark everywhere else, the occupants of *Dark Earth* have rather cleverly decided to build their cities beneath these pockets of light. These cities are called Stallites, and are the only safe places to be in the big nasty world of *Dark Earth*.



(Above, left) Twat him in the back, then run away. (*Coward - Ed.*)





(Top right) I am brave. I have a very big axe. I will kill you.

(Middle right) Real-time SVGA combat. Smart.

(Bottom right) Our hero bravely takes on a dangerous looking torch.



People Are Strange

Well, the ones in Dark Earth certainly are. There are 80 characters to meet in the game, but as you would expect, some are more interesting than others. Here are just a few of the oddballs you'll come across on your travels. These are obviously preliminary sketches, but if you feel so inclined, you can colour them in yourself. Tell you what, why not send in your newly coloured-in sketches to 'I coloured a sketch in comp' at the usual address, and we'll award a 'mystery' prize for the best effort. Probably.

THE SUNSEERS

These guys are priests of the Sun God. They pray a lot and are generally held in great regard by the populace of Dark Earth. The Sunseers are the guarantors of light, and protect people from the shadows of the Darklands.



THE GUARDIANS OF FIRE

The quardians act as backup to the Sunseers, in as much as they protect the perimeters of the Stallite, whereas the Sunseers prefer to stay 'indoors' looking after more important matters. At night they light up the city with their huge torches and see off anyone who might be 'misbehaving'



THE BUILDERS

The backbone of the city's workforce, they can be relied upon to build and maintain the city's many structures. They also make furniture and tools. The builders are given the nicest houses and furniture in the land, so if you ever visit Dark Earth and need to crash on someone's floor, give these guys a ring.



THE PROVIDERS

Farmers and hunters, they tend fields and orchards and raise cattle to feed the population of Dark Earth, distributing the goods evenly throughout the populace.



THE SCAVENGERS

These are the poor folk of Dark Earth. They survive by rummaging through garbage or searching abandoned and remote places for items they can barter with. Unsurprisingly, a large proportion of them turn to burglary and theft in an effort to make ends meet.



Product details

Developer: Mindscape Bordeaux

Publisher: Mindscape

Telephone: 01444 246333

Format: PC CD-ROM Release date: March 97

several unfortunate after-effects: our lovely blue sky turns into a huge dome of black dust, and as a result our days are perpetual twilight, and our nights are deathly black. The good news is there are still a few pockets of civilisation intact amidst the chaos. These lucky human survivors live in Stallites, fortified cities that provide a refuge from the madness outside. The only problem is they've lost the plot a

(Below right) It's an RPG so expect to spend lots of time reading books on the history of the land.

(Bottom right) Sewertype antics. And I bet that's an energy bar on the left. Bet you anything.

(Below) So, polygon puff is it? I'll have you for that.

somewhere out there is a mighty Sun God who (apparently a few folk have their doubts about the authenticity of the giant comet scenario, funny that). Your quest will take you from one Stallite to the next (that's right, you've got to venture

out into the dark scary bits) with all manner of monsties, baddies and ne'er do wells to practise your sword-waving skills on, and fiendish puzzles to tax your brain in between the hectic action scenes.

bit and have decided that

protects them from evil,

and generally does all

the things you would

worth his salt.

find out the truth

about how the Earth

came to be in such a mess

expect from any deity

Enter you, as a

fearless explorer,

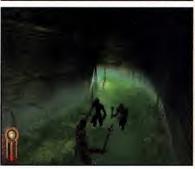
whose quest it is to

To ensure the game is as non-linear as possible, Mindscape have designed the adventure in such a fashion that the story unfolds in different ways depending on the player's own choices at key points. This means that no two games will be the same, giving Dark Earth a very high replay factor. There's plenty to get your teeth into in the combat scenes too, with multiple difficulty levels ensuring know-it-alls

and no-hopers alike will find much to enjoy when the going gets a little rough.

As far as all at Zone are concerned, Dark Earth is shaping up to be something very special indeed. Check out part two of the diary next month when we'll be going to Bordeaux to meet the developers. We'll be grilling them about their hopes and dreams for the biggest project they've ever worked on, and asking them all sorts of silly questions that don't have anything to do with the game. Au revoir, pet. Z









If Naseem Hamed had been crap at boxing the chances are high that he'd have started a minicab business instead - which he'd have called NasCars. But one day he'd have been sued by NASCAR™ Racing, whose lawyers would have forced him to change it to NasCabs. That's **Duncan Mac™Donald's** theory, anyway, but he's sad like that.

RIVING GAMES AND SEQUELS, EH? Bastards! What is it with these things? They're all over the place. If I had a penny for every driving game that spawned a 'child', I'd now have... er, six pence. (You know what I mean, though.) Still, it's understandable why the car-driving game genre scores so highly in the 'let's do it again' stakes. Think about it like this...

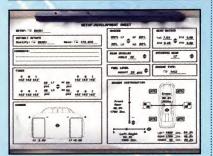
There they are - the programmers and they've just finished coding their latest pride and joy:

"The punters will go apeshit over our realistic physics modelling," says one.

"Yes," says another, "and the fact that we spent months on our hands and knees measuring the real-life tracks with rulers should go down well, too."

And it does go down well. Everyone in gaming land celebrates, with





(Top) Yes, it's bendy bitmaps akimbo.

(Right) First perspective view from a Sinclair C5.

(Inset) Bobby Labonte the Don Juan of the Indycar world. Girls swoon at his feet.



street parties and whatnot. All is well, but then computers suddenly start getting faster. Oh dear...

Waste not, want not...

If you've got a perfect mathematical model for 'car handling', and you've also got femtoscopically accurate data for all the race tracks in the universe, there's only only one ongoing battle left to fight: presentation.

We've all witnessed the race between the Brits and the Yanks on this score. Geoff Crammond hit the first home run with F1GP about a trillion years ago, and we saw that it was good. Then Papyrus retaliated with Indycar, and we saw that was good, also. "I will strike back," said Geoff, but he didn't really have much to strike back with at the time because he was aiming predominantly at the European market, and we all had shit PCs. Not so the Yanks. Cue NASCAR Racing, which was a hoot, even in jerko-vision. Papyrus were now winning easily, but Geoff no doubt took solace in the fact that NASCAR, when played in svga, ran at a rate of about one frame per millennium, even on your average Yank ninja-stack.

But then, in a surprise attack, Papyrus released the first sequel of the war.

"Here's Indycar 2," they announced, gloatingly.

"Feck!" said Geoff. (Allegedly.) But things weren't as bad as they seemed: Indycar 2 wasn't really that 'different' from Indycar 1. In fact, eight out of ten owners (who expressed a preference) claimed they couldn't tell one from the other. (Until they crashed and saw bits coming off the cars, as had happened with NASCAR Racing.)

Much time passed. Then, after an interminable wait, F1GP2 finally arrived, this spring. Old slowcoach Geoff 'The Snail' Crammond had finally done it: he'd surpassed Indycar 2 and NASCAR 1, even if it had taken him four squillion years. Surely a holiday was on the cards for the bumbling toff?



you don't faff about.

(Left top) The Elephant

and Castle roundabout.

(Left bottom) At last -

the car setup screen is on one 'page' meaning





No rest for the wicked...

So back to now, and the point of these two pages: namely NASCAR 2, of which you have a 'taster' on the cover disk. Have you played it yet? If you have, you'll have played it in svGA, seeing as that's the only graphics mode available. So how was it on your machine? Jerk-tastic? If it was then I can only apologise for having played it on the office P166, where it was as smooth as a baby's bottom. (And, apparently, it's still to be speeded up by another 25%.) I've done some mental arithmetic, actually, and have come to the conclusion (if everything I've been told is true) that the finished version should zoom along happily, in hi-res and full detail, on a P90. But all this isn't telling you what's going to be available', as it were... and how it's all going to differ from the prequel.

Er... the, erm, differences...

As you may have seen for yourself, the NASCAR textures are more 'groovy' this time round - and I'm thinking particularly here about the grass, which seems to have daisies and buttercups on it. "So what?" you say. I'll tell you: no more hassle from your wife/chick. She can now join in the fun. You race while she enjoys the flora. So what else?

Actually, this isn't so easy. It's early days, and I've not seen a great deal

more than you, to be honest, so maybe I should do a breakdown of the few things I do know...

(1) All the tracks from the last game are going to be included - which shouldn't be too hard, considering that 80% of them can be drawn using a compass.

(2) Added to this, there are going to be two 'fantasy' tracks, which

means lots of hills and corners and jumps (I think).

(3) This version is nearly properly licensed but,

apparently, four of the drivers wanted too much dosh - which means that four of the driver names and photos will be 'pretend'. (Do you care about this? I'm buggered if I do. I don't know any NASCAR driver's names or faces, unless you count Paul Newman, but he's dead.) (He isn't actually - Ed.) (4) The paint kit. You'll get the design-acar paint kit with the game, so you won't have to shell out for it separately at a later date. This is important, I reckon, 'cos you want to drive a 'custom' job, don't you? My favourite scam is to go for a sort of all-over grey, with loads of rust spots and just the one sponsor decal saying something like "Joe's Autos" or "Budgen's" (it makes those crash replays all the more enjoyable).

(5) Talking of replays, they'll be far easier to access than before, with a lot less faffing about.

(6) Likewise the car set-up screen. Yes, I said 'screen' - singular. Papyrus have finally decided to do away with their time-consuming eye candy and have gone instead for playability. All I can say is that they took their time,

> but hoorah anyway. (7) A very useful audible

(Left) This shot took ages to set up, and there's an exciting story behind it... but at the end of the day it loses so much in translation that you'd probably fall asleep half way through reading. (ie. you really had to BE there).

(Right top) The paintkit:

ready and waiting for

you to write 'Budgen's'

(Below) Let's face it -

it's what everyone eventually ends up

doing in NASCAR.

over the bonnet.

Product details

Developer: Papyrus

Publisher: Sierra

Telephone: 01734 303322

e-mail: http://www.sierra.com

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: December

commentary, informing you that you're going the wrong way and so on.

What else is different?

Um. I can't tell you, because, by the very nature of the beast, NASCAR 2 is going to be very much along the same lines as NASCAR 1. Souped-up graphics, obviously, are the order of the day, and then the stuff mentioned above. The AI will no doubt be tinkered with as well, as will some aspects of the handling (although you'll still have to brake three miles before a sharp corner, but that's realism for you). Apart from all this, though, it still looks as if one very annoying bit will remain... the joystick calibration routines. Geoff Crammond (bless his heart) offers just about any control combination possible in his games.

Papyrus, however, don't. Reverse gear, as usual, is treated as if it's some sort of unnecessary 'extra', and as such is assigned to a separate keyboard buffer.

What's the bloody problem? Stick it on the ruddy joystick, please.

Oh well, every rose has to have a thorn and I predict that NASCAR 2 is going to rule the saloon car roost for as long as it takes Geoff Crammond (or someone else) to counter with a Touring Car game. Wait for the review, nevertheless. Z







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so good it changes people's
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greatest releases ever...
it's a must... could change
your opinion of strategy
games forever..."

PC Home 91% (April 96)
"offers just about everything
you could want..."

PC Zone 90%

Recommended (Mar 96) "...exactly the right balance..."

Strategy Plus (USA) 5/5
Stamp of Approval (June 96)
CD-Rom Mag (France) 5/5
(June 96)
Gambler (Poland) 95%
(May 96)
Hyper (Australia) 96%
(April 96)
Micromania (Spain) 97%
Mikrobitti (Finland) 94%
(May 96)
PC Player (Germany) 6/6
(May 96)
Riki (Czech Republic) 5/5

(April 96)

Once in a while a game comes along which captures the imagination of the world, crossing the line from 'Great' to 'Classic' status such a game is Sid Meier's Civilization® II

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World Wide Web Site: http://www.microprose.com.

savs Paul Mallinson.

"Horror films rule! Yeah! Yeah! You Realms_oo can, like, see people get their heads cut off, and see their brains spill out onto the street. Which is pretty cool," Haunting

(Left) Taking a breather to pray for your life will no doubt help.

ORROR FILMS. I COULD BORE YOU with the subject. If I were on Mastermind, it would be my second choice of specialist subject. After 'masturbation'. (A sudden rush of wind causes the scene to change.)

Me: Black chair? Who're you? Magnus Magnusson: Never mind that. Paul Mallinson, you must answer as many questions as you can in the time permitted. Your time will start after I've asked the first question. Question one: Isabelle Adjani and Sam Neill starred together in which film, directed by Andrej Zulowski?

Me: Possession.

MM: Correct. Who played 'Ash' in Sam Raimi's The Evil Dead?

Me: Bruce Campbell.

MM: Correct. Name the films of the George Romero Living Dead trilogy.



Me: Night Of The Living Dead, Dawn Of The Dead, Day Of The Dead.

MM: Correct. Name the co-writer of The Evil Dead II who later went on to write The Dead Pool for Clint Eastwood.

Me: Scott Spiegel.

MM: Correct. The star of Wes Craven's disturbing Last House On The Left and Ruggero Deodato's vicious House On The Edge Of The Park also wrote a number of hit songs for Elvis Presley. What was his name?

Me: Erm. John Morghen? MM: Wrong. Maybe you should've stuck to 'wanking'?

(Wobbles back to reality.)

A good scare

You get the idea. But the reason I watch so many and know so much about horror films is because they're such a good laugh. Whether they are dark and moody, or visceral and



(Above) Each monster has around 300 frames of motion-captured animation to help them move realistically.

(Below far left) Realms Of The Haunting never did pretend to be Quake, but it does have a striking visual style, thanks to a fair amount of research into the occult.

(Below left & below) Wire frame creature. and the room where your adventure begins.

Product details

Developer: Gremlin Interactive **Publisher:** Gremlin Interactive

Telephone: 01142 753423

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: November

Cacking it!

hard to come by these days, but here are just a few films that have incapacitated our linen underclothing:

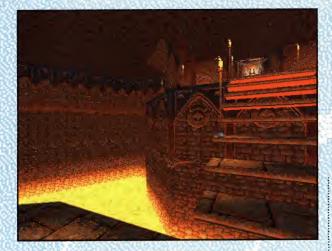
- The Shining
- The Exorcist
- Salem's Lot
- Alien
- Night Of The Living Dead
- The Evil Dead
- Dead Of Night
- The Silence Of The Lambs
- 10. Seven

funny, a good horror film appeals in a similar kind of way to a road accident you know what you're going to see is going to turn your stomach, but you still want to get in there and find out what all the fuss is about.

Horror games, on the other hand, are a different kettle of fish altogether. Crap like Viacom's Dracula Unleashed and Ir terplay's Frankenstein never did the genre any favours, and cheap,









- Quake (iD)
- Lurking Horror (Infocom)
- Dungeon Master (Interplay)
- Gabriel Knight (Sierra)
- Alone In The Dark (Infogrames)

badly-drawn gore bitmaps will never have the same appeal as cheap, low-budget horror films. A bit more effort has to be put in to make a game scary. Atmosphere, a good story and a believable environment are already elements of Gremlin Interactive's first person horror mystery Realms Of The Haunting, which is smart considering that they are important features of any decent horror film.

Widescreen version

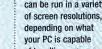
Described as "a disturbing vision of the future based on the many beliefs of the apocalypse" (whatever that means), Realms Of The Haunting begins with lead Adam Randall investigating the untimely death of his father in the remote Cornish village of Helston. A ghostly visitation warns of great danger as the doors to the outside world are locked off by an unseen force. Trapped,

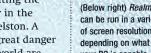
(Above) Have you ever wondered what it'd feel like to fall face down into a pit of lava? Well soon you'll be able to

(Above right) Actor David Learner (seen here as the evil Belial) played Marvin the Paranoid in The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy. S'true.

(Right) Crowther's 3D Engine has a 'motion' blur option that makes it look as though you're adventuring on ten pints of Stella Artois.

(Below right) Realms can be run in a variety of screen resolutions. depending on what your PC is capable of handling.







and in the dark, the first few steps into the game are fraught with danger but packed full of enlightening clues. Full motion video segments (in Widescreen) have been designed to blend in seamlessly with the 'proper' Doom-like adventuring of the main game, both adding to the storyline and rewarding the player for puzzlesolving. Live action actors have been bluescreened into the many 3D modelled sets, which is nothing new after Wing Commander but Realms Of The Haunting approaches the technique differently, using video more often but in shorter bursts and at relevant branches in the plot. That's not to say that Realms is an 'interactive movie' of some sort, because it isn't. It's basically a good, old fashioned pointand-click adventure with an unusual first-person viewpoint.

More than shooting

Looking at the screenshots adorning these pages, you could also be forgiven for thinking that Realms Of The Haunting is nothing more than a shoot 'em up with a horror scenario and a new set of texture maps. You'd be wrong, of course. An analytical mind and an observant pair of eyes will help more than a quick trigger finger in this game, even though there is plenty to shoot at in the army of motion-captured creatures that tirelessly bother unwary travellers like yourself.

The solving of puzzles - good puzzles too, not just switch-flicking exercises will play a major part in the unfolding of the game. A lot of effort has gone into the mythos behind the plot, the religious aspects of it and the symbolism of the occult which means there's a fair bit to read on your way through, but it's all relevant and often helpful. In keeping with all good graphic adventures, the puzzles in Realms are





mostly visual and are therefore only as hard as the player makes them. Thanks to this, relatively steady progress can be made through the game and into different areas, ensuring that boredom is never allowed to set in.

Run away!

The cause of all this inter-dimensional demonry, a French sorcerer named Belial, has the path to his whereabouts well guarded. He would have; it is, after all, your ultimate goal to destroy him. Outwitting his minions is not so easy when they surprise in numbers, and the guns often have to come out to clear the way.

A selection of weapons, from shotguns and pistols to magical sticks (and even a blunderbuss!), have been included to please the more aggressive player (ie. all of us) and juggling between them and the rest of the game is made possible by an extremely intelligent cursor, which is capable of discerning instantaneously if an item can be examined, taken, used or shot at. Even in this early version the control interface, plus cursor, feels comfortable to use, and even though there isn't a 'mouse look' option in there yet (which there really should be) it's still not a problem to move around (ie. run away) at speed if the situation demands it. Which, in Realms Of The Haunting, is almost certain to happen. Z



Realms facts

Ten things you never knew about Realms

- 2000AD regular Greg Staples did some of the graphics.
- The realm of Ghenna is apparently the Jehovah's Witness version of hell.
- The music has been described as 'a bit John Carpenter'.
- It is the most expensive in-house title ever to be undertaken
- Top programmer Tony Crowther created the 3D engine.
- The main character Adam Randall is played by actor David Tuomi
- Female interest sidekick Rebecca is played by Emma Powell.
- Adam and Emma got on very well during filming. 8.
- There was a love scene, but it got cut out.
- All of the video sections were shot in Derby. Cough.

NO

NO FLASHY INTRO'S.

NO 'INTERACTIVE CHARACTERS' THAT YOU CAN'T INTERACT WITH.

NO 'AMAZING ANIMATIONS' THAT YOU CAN'T CONTROL.

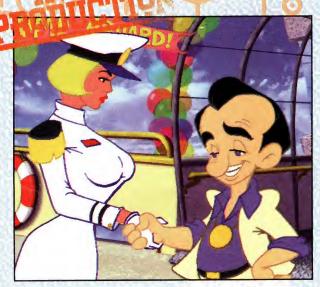
NO REDUNDANT ACTORS TRYING TO EARN A LIVING.

NO ADDITIVES.



Of all the PC Zone regulars, only Chris Anderson is old enough to remember the first game in the Larry series (he's nine years old). Who better, then, to review the latest game in this fine, witty, adult series? (Er, someone over 18? - Ed.)

eisure Suit 7: Love for



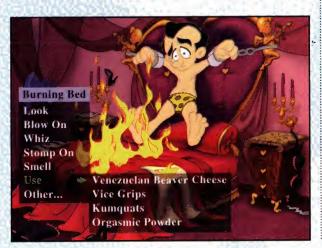
O YOU DON'T THINK AL LOWE IS the funniest guy in the whole wide world, eh? You don't think that the Leisure Suit Larry series is the most hilarious thing you've ever seen? Well, er, to be honest, the last couple were a bit crap, but it wasn't always like that, you know. When the original game was released, it was actually quite a hoot. I don't know if we all fell it for it at the time because there was nothing else around ('we' meaning, ahem, veteran PC gamers), or because at that stage Al Lowe was still trying to work out how to disappear completely

(Above) Cor, phwoar, lovely pair, etc.

(Above right) HMS Bouncy, complete with bouncy front bits, wahay.

(Below) The new interface lets you type in anything. So you can say bum, or tit, or fu.. (We get the idea - Ed.)

(Below right) Cor, pant, groan, slurp, dribble. fumble... (Stop it! - Ed.)



Product details

Developer: Sierra Publisher: Sierra

Telephone: 01734 303322

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: December

up his own arse (a feat he managed to pull off admirably in Larry 6). Then again, it might be down to the fact that I was only one year old at the time, and was yet to develop the sophisticated sense of humour I have today (Benny Hill, for example, has me in stitches).

Either way, the fact remains that this series, as far as many gamers are concerned, deserves a place of honour in the PC gaming history books. LSL 1 was the first graphic adventure to appear on the PC. It was genuinely funny and a corker of an adventure game. Unfortunately, things went rapidly downhill after the first episode. The second game wasn't too bad, but the third one was decidedly ropey, and the less said about the more recent ones, the better. Worry not, however, because things are looking up big time with Larry 7...

Blimey, proper graphics!

Larry 6 was decidedly plop in the graphics department. Sierra obviously realised this because the latest game in the series sports very hi-res cartoonytype graphics that suit the games' particular brand of bawdy humour. Thank the Lord they avoided the temptation to use FMV (digitised Larry would have been an absolute disaster).

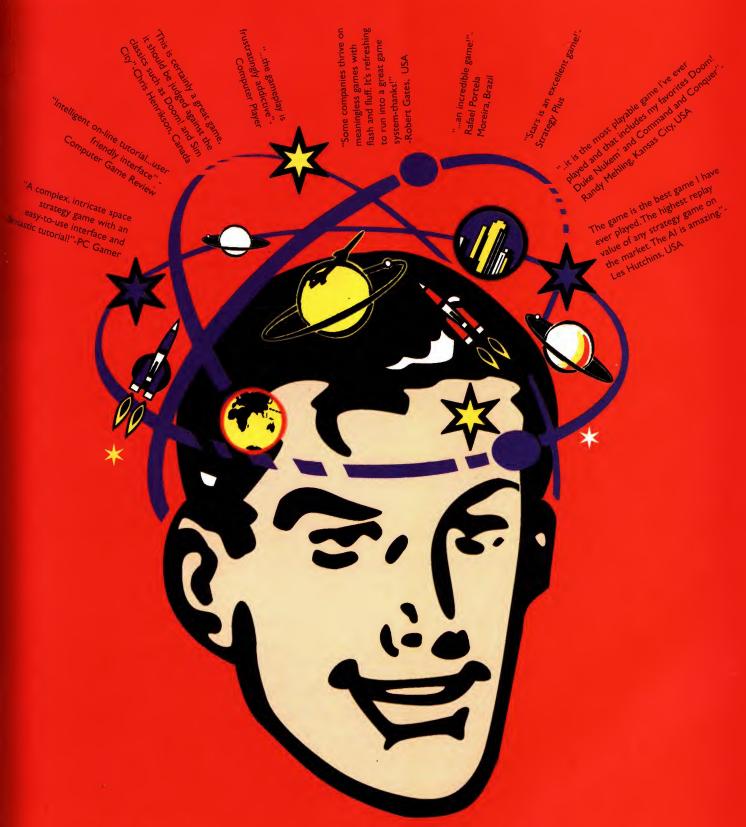




The game is set on board the luxury cruise liner HMS Bouncy (oo-er). As usual, Larry tries to date every chick he comes across, and as usual he fails miserably. You may think, then, that Larry 7 is more or less the same as all the other ones. Not so. With Larry 7 Sierra have supplied a template and tools which you can use to 'put' yourself in the game, though why anyone would want the world to see them as Larry Laffer is beyond me. In true 'what planet are they on?' Sierra tradition, the package also includes scratch 'n' sniff puzzles which I haven't seen but I'm sure they're absolutely hilarious.

Curiously, in addition to the standard point-and-click interface, Sierra have brought back the option to type in commands, giving you an almost unlimited number of ways in which to interact with the game. I haven't played Larry 7 to any great extent yet, but the graphics look really smart and the new interface adds an extra dimension to the gameplay. We'll review it next month and let you know whether or not Al Lowe has finally seen sense and got someone to put some genuinely funny gags into the game. z





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Battleship



Paul Presley was always the best *Battleship* player in his school. Of course, the other kids would complain about his use of nuclear missiles but he would just argue that it was a product of the age.

ou sank my Battleship!" Ahh, such sweet words. Conjuring long-forgotten memories of a misspent youth. There we'd be, me and 'Stinky' Henderson, hiding out behind the bike sheds, pitching A4s against c9s, D3s against F11s, when we should have been sitting in a sweaty classroom learning about Applied Theoretical Mathematics.

Now someone has the gall, nay barefaced cheek, to try and re-invent the wheel so to speak. To update the classic. To remake that which should remain, er, unremade. Did they learn nothing from Last Man Standing? Yes, Hasbro Interactive are unleashing Battleship



onto a PC near you. And the worst thing is that it looks so bloody good.

It's all-out war!

In this age of high technology, it simply wouldn't be enough to just give you a digital version of what's little more than a guessing game. Thus Hasbro's Battleship has been totally revamped, from the ground up. The basic principles are still the same – find your enemy and sink him, but added to this is a much deeper understanding of naval warfare. Now you can move your fleet around, launch aircraft from your carriers to go on scouting or bombing missions, intercept missiles and so on.



(Left) As you can see, Hasbro have decided to pull out all the stops as far as presentation goes. Slick is a bit of an understatement.

(Right) Fancy FMV scenes are cleverly cut into the action so they won't get in the way.

(Below left) It's no longer just about boats - you'll have a whole task force at your disposal, including helicopters and planes.

(Below) Some of the FMV runs under the gameplay, so you can keep playing and still gawp at the fancy rendered footage.

Product details

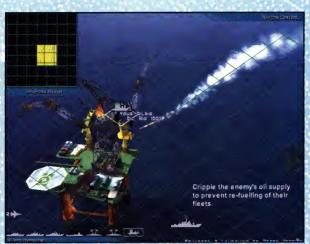
Developer: Hasbro Interactive **Publisher:** Hasbro Interactive **Telephone:** 0181 569 1234

Format: CD-ROM
Release date: October



At your disposal is much more than the simple missile. Multiple types of weapons, aircraft, helicopters, AWACS radars and submarines help you plan out a strategy. Islands, oil rigs and dockyards help with reinforcements and fuel problems. Mission objectives range from the simple total annihilation of your enemy to the more challenging problem of capturing islands, escorting convoys and recovering satellites. Basically Hasbro have done for Battleship what Nihilist (reviewed last issue) did for Asteroids.

The level of challenge is increased with the option for up to four players to battle it out over a network or Internet server. Because the action is also in real-time, gone is the problem of waiting for





your turn to arrive before you can retaliate. You can even form alliances with other players (which naturally can be broken whenever is most opportune – hey, all's fair in war and war).

(Above) You can resize the grid to make the playing arena as large or compact as you wish.

Pencil and paper

Complimenting the advances in gameplay, Hasbro have filled the game with state-of-the-art presentation techniques. Launch a missile and you're treated to a short FMV sequence showing it taking off. Unlike many other games, these don't become intrusive – partly because they've been kept short enough not to get in the way of the gameplay, partly because there are just so many of them that there's no danger of repetitiveness, and mainly because they fit the action so well.

The layout of the game screen (as you can see from the pictures on these pages) has been well thought out, too. You can zoom in to see the individual ships and planes in your fleet or you can zoom out to get a more global look at things. Enemy ships are only revealed when you can see them (or pick them up on radar) and everything is designed to be less than two clicks away.

Battleship is just the first of a series of board game conversions (see panels) in the pipeline from Hasbro Interactive, and if this is any indication of what's to come, then we're in for a real treat over the next few months. Of course, I'm really holding out for a version of Operation or Ker-Plunk. Z

(Below) Kaa-booom! You sunk my battleship!

(Below right) Up to four people will be able to play real-time over a network or on-line.

(Below far right) They'll be loadsa new weapons to play around with, as well as oil rigs, islands and ports. The gameplay is basically the same, but it's just a lot bigger and more intensive.



Coming Soon From Hasbro...



DISK

The classic game of global strategy and the only game other than *Monopoly* to let you see what true bastards your friends really are. The principal task of *Risk* is to take over the world. The real challenge is to be the first to break an alliance with an opponent eg "I gave you 50,000 troops, as much ammo as you could carry and helped you attack Spain on two fronts. Now where's your part of the deal?" "Here,

you can have Wales." "Bastard." "Sucker." At which point the board gets upturned and the struggles turn from global power to who can break the other's nose first.

CLUEDO

The classic game of murder, mystery and intrigue and the only game that nobody can play any more without 'humorously' re-enacting the 'Name Selecting' scene from *Reservoir Dogs*. The basic goal of *Cluedo* is to identify which of the Agatha Christiestyle characters bumped off the owner of a mansion and with which weapon. An updated version of *Cluedo - Cluedo 2000 -* was shelved after pressure

groups complained about the use of 'street' characters like The Purple Pimp, Yardie Yellow and Corrupt West Midlands Police Chief Green, and weapons such as an Uzi 9mm, a rape gang and prison brutality.



OTHELLO

The classic game of concentration and foresight, and the only game other than *Backgammon* to be enjoyed by the trendy 'Easy Listening' crowd. The idea is to surround your opponent's pebbles with yours and in the process change their colour. The truth is that it's little more than Noughts and Crosses for intellectuals and every game is inevitably won by whoever gets to the four corners first.



VAHTZEE

The classic game of dice, cups, scorecards and shouting, and the only game to have a truly classic television advertising campaign in the 70s. Lots of tuxedo-clad Jason King lookalikes, swamped by socialite women in fur coats all throwing dice around the room and shouting, "YAHTZEEEE!!" for no apparent reason. In reality, Yahtzee would only be brought out at family Christmases where Dad would

try to enter into the spirit by shouting randomly but Mum would always just throw the dice and look embarrassed.



CHARLIE BROOKER'S BISCUIT

The classic game of sexual prowess and the only game to feature edible contents. The idea is to squirt cream out of plastic dildos onto a centralised Ritz cracker, with the person who gets the least on a cracker having to eat the sticky mess. The advertising campaign features a typically American family shooting their loads onto the traditionally

'gormless' Dad and it looks set to be in all good toy stores by Christmas. Okay, we're making this up, but it sounds good.







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BLUEPRINT

Patrick McCarthy thought this was going to be a detective-based RPG about someone who died 20 years ago without leaving a will. He's so stupid we sometimes use his head for a door stop.

Interstate 76



(Above) Cars, chicks, rockets, guns and big hair. Now you're talkin'.

Product details

Developer: Activision
Publisher: Activision

Telephone: 0181 742 9400

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: December

REN'T YOU GLAD THAT GRAVITY IS as strong as it is? Think how much longer everything would take if it was weaker: pouring a cup of tea; getting into bed when you're really tired; waiting for a pass from an Arsenal defender to come down... life would be almost unbearably slow. It would be far better, of course, if you could adjust it as necessary around the home - quickly turning it down when you drop something valuable; switching it off completely when you have sex, or have to move some furniture... whatever. You may argue that this is impossible, that gravity is absolute and unchanging, but anyone who was alive in the 70s knows different. Gravity alters with the passage of time, and the 70s are conclusive proof.



(Right) If you think it looks good, wait 'till you see it movin'.



Which Way Is Up

How do we know this? Because the 48inch flares people had in those days just wouldn't be able to support themselves in today's gravity. They'd be plastered to the legs of the wearer like an enormous elasticated bandage. Likewise the haircuts - you don't seriously imagine that Farrah Fawcett's haircut would stay flicked back at the sides in that gravitydefying way these days, do you? Her face would be completely obscured behind a wall of hair, and she'd have to resort to walking round with a number three crop. The average jacket lapel would be scraping along the ground like an elaborate anti-static device (unless it was polyester, in which case it would be a pro-static device).

Do What You Wanna Do

Which brings us to Interstate 76. Not only is it set around the stretch of tarmac of the same name, but it's also set firmly in the year of polyester lounge suits and sideburns the size of baguettes. It's an alternative reality 70s. There's still nary a natural fibre in sight, but a gang of auto-mercenaries is intent on destroying America's oil reserves.

You get to race about in one of those enormous muscle cars Americans had to salve their egos after losing several wars with small South-East Asian countries. And you get to shoot the shit out of the mercenaries through a series of missions, in one of 25 gas-guzzling





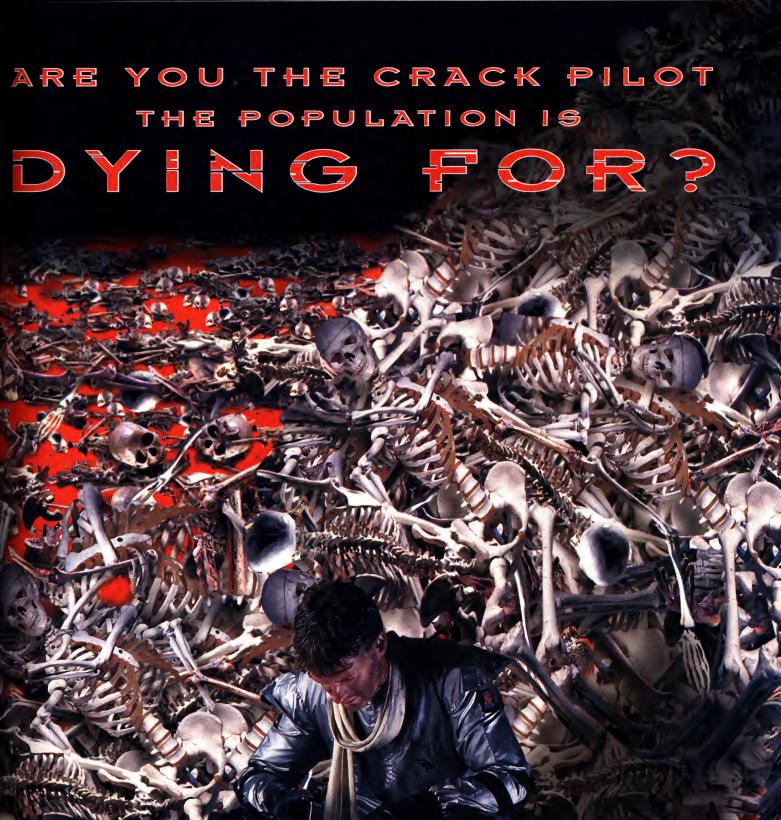
monsters with rocket launchers on the roof. Many of the people behind the *MechWarrior* series are involved, and it uses a version of that game's terrain engine, so you won't have to stick to the roads as in previous attempts to do this sort of thing. You can wander about freely in the desert, using valleys for concealment, or whatever. You can even jump rivers if you can get the speed up (which, in a 5.5-litre engined car, shouldn't be too much of a problem).

Shame

The missions are linked by cut-scenes which are gloriously retro, and the whole thing's reminiscent of an episode of Starsky and Hutch – right down to the 70s lounge-funk soundtrack, the clothes and speech, and even the title sequence. It looks like being a great laugh, if only because it doesn't take itself too seriously. Of course, the heavy weaponry helps. I bet you wish you'd kept your short-sleeved safari suit now... 7











We've started a policy at PC Zone of matching the name of previewed games with the IQs of the journalists who write them. Unfortunately, Paul Presley's was the only one that got high enough to come close to GT Interactive's latest.

Product details

Developer: Tribeca Interactive

Publisher: GT Interactive Telephone: 0171 258 3791

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: December

RODUCED BY ROBERT DE NIRO," it says on the box. Yup, Bobby De Niro. Ol' scrunchy eyes. Travis Bickle himself. Cuddles to his friends. And he produced Nine apparently. At least, that's what the marketing people would have you believe. Myself, I have a different theory. As always with the Famous Names **Involved With Computer Games** syndrome (now officially recognised by 84% of the world's doctors), the involvement is usually far less than it may seem. Often it's little more than a voice-over, but in this case it doesn't even reach those dizzy heights. Nine is produced by Robert De Niro's production company, which probably means that his involvement amounted to saying, "Yeah, do one of them game things. Are you looking at me?"

All is not lost, though, because to balance out the lack of Robert De Niro, we have the vocal talents of James Belushi, Christopher Reeve and Cher



(Left) No, that's Cher that is. The one in blue. Well, it's her voice anyway.

(Below) How's this for an entrance lobby?





(Above) I mentioned that the game was odd, didn't 1?

(Above right) And that's James Belushi, Honest. (You sure it's not Cher? amongst others actually appearing in the game. So huzzah for that! Dignity is saved, honour is restored and perhaps I should stop waffling now and tell you about the game.

It'd be an idea...

It's a 7th Guest/Myst kind of thing. You've been left a strange hotel in your uncle's will and before you can take over the place you have to deal with the strange inhabitants that are left inside. Strange doesn't begin to describe them, though, as the hotel used to be a haven

for weirdos all looking to unleash their creative energies however they see fit.

This means the hotel has been swamped by all sorts of odd puzzles for you to solve if you want to find your way out of it. On top of that, you have to deal with the twisted minds of a pair of evil twins who want the hotel for their own plans (voiced by a couple of the guys from Aerosmith - apparently De Niro's name has some pull to it).

Nine has a lot of big-name pulling power behind it, but how it shapes up in the gameplay department is anyone's guess at the moment. However, Myststyle games do seem to sell like hot cakes at a Fat Person's Convention so perhaps it'll surprise us all. Z



Celebrity Corner

Interesting facts you may not know about the stars of Nine...

CHRISTOPHER REEVE

Back when I were but a wee bairn, my mother had a cleaning job at the house next door to Christopher Reeve's in Chelsea. I would often accompany her and we would occasionally bump into the man himself (So that's how the poor ferk ended up in a wheelchair? - Ed.). Being such a nice, charming fellow, he would often bounce me and my brother up and down on his knee. That's right, Superman used to bounce me on his knee. These ys of course, horses bounce him off their knees... (Oh, right - Ed.)

JAMES BELUSHI

Despite dying of a drugs overdose in the 80s, James Belushi has since gone on to star in several successful films with dogs and Arnold Schwarzenegger. He is also set to appear with Dan Akroyd in the forthcoming sequel to his most popular film, *The Blues Brothers 2000.* (*I think*

you're getting him confused with his brother, John - Ed.) Oh, right.

Cher is a singer. (That's an interesting fact??? - Ed.) Well, I did say you may already know some of them. (You might as well say Cher's hair is black - Ed.) Cool, that's a good one.

CHER
Cher's hair is black. (*Christ! – Ed.*)

CHARLIE DRAKE

Charlie Drake's name in Spanish actually translates as 'Earthquake of a woman's genitalia'. (Hang on,. Charlie Drakes's not in Nine - Ed.) Back off, I'm getting desperate.

BUNGLE FROM RAINBOW

(That's enough - Ed.) Aww...

LOOK OUT! FOKKERS!



PREPARE FOR "FLYING CORPS". NOT ONLY CAN YOU COMPETE AGAINST COMPUTER PILOTS, YOU CAN CHOOSE TO GO HEAD TO HEAD WITH A HUMAN OPPONENT OR WITH UP TO 8 PLAYERS ON A WINDOWSTM

'95 NETWORK. FLYING CORPS IS SO REALISTIC WE'VE INCLUDED THE
ROYAL FLYING CORPS HANDBOOK TO HELP GET YOU AIRBORNE.

A game based on Milton Keynes? It sounded too good to be true. And it wasn't. But at least it gave Paul Presley the chance to insult yet another British town as part of his ongoing quest to alienate himself from the entire country.

Zombieville



ROM DUSK TILL DAWN', NOW there was a bloody strange film. I went in expecting another typical Tarantino tale of gangsters and hoodlums and ended up faced with an orgy of vampires, zombies and classic B-movie parody. Anyhow, I mention it because thanks to trendsetters like the boy Quentin, style gurus who insist on knowing what's 'in' and people like Jonathan Ross, the world of the shlocky horror B-movie is back in vogue and Psygnosis are bringing it to our computer screens with Zombieville.

The tale is set in one of those small American townships that only seem to exist for the purpose of having some supernatural horror befall them. You are a local newspaper reporter who gets an anonymous tip about strange goings on at a military base 50 miles outside the town. Remembering previous reports of unexplained disappearances, secret military research and sinister government cover-ups all based in the area, you set off hoping to put two and two together to make a headline.

The real story is one of supernatural



Product details

Developer: Psygnosis **Publisher:** Psygnosis

Telephone: 0151 282 3000

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: February 1997

battles with the forces of evil, an ancient spirit set free to seek revenge and an entire population of locals and army personnel that have been turned into flesh-eating zombies. I can't give away too many story details as they make up the plot of the game and I don't want to be accused of spoiling the game before it's even finished. I might not get invited on the next Psygnosis freebie to some foreign clime.

It's the way you tell 'em

The hero of the game is a down-at-heel reporter who bears as much resemblance to the action stars of Hollywood as I do (ie. not a lot). He's grizzled, sozzled, balding, somewhat bloated and in a piece of typecasting that's not likely to put them on his Christmas card list, Psygnosis have hired the acting talents of comedian Greg Proops to provide his voice.

This helps the game create the kind of tongue-in-cheek atmosphere that it's looking for. Zombieville isn't meant to



(Above) Our hero takes no chances as he remembers the golden rule of Horror Film Survival: If it moves, kill it. If it doesn't move, shoot it before it does.

(Above left) This shows you what a scene looks like before the final texture-mapping has been added. Still looks pretty good, doesn't it? scare the pants off you but to make you laugh. Cleverly realising that the only adventure games that seem to capture the audience these days are comedies, the creative team behind Zombieville have done extensive research into the more bizarre zombie films available. They even held a massive zombie-thon in which dozens of the very worst B-movies (and C-movies and D-movies) ever made were watched in one long session.

How to save the world

The game engine itself is a cross between the Alone In The Dark series and the traditional point-and-click adventure game. You have full directional control over your character as you wander through the dimly-lit town, with the camera angles all being lifted straight out of the films. Adding to the player's feeling of freedom is the fact that the characters and locations

Censorship

During the initial stages of Zombieville's development, the producers of the game ran into the old bugaboos of the censorship police. It seems the early drafts of Mary Gentle's script contained far more in the way of expletives and the graphics were being pitched with a much higher blood and gore content. Unfortunately, to sell the game in overseas markets, numerous conditions had to be met. In Germany you're not allowed to show blood, so out went the gore. In America you have to pander to the family side of the audience, so out went the nastier words. Everywhere they turned, Psygnosis ran into a different set of cultural taboos. They even had to shelve a scene involving a priest being ripped to shreds in case it upset Deep South Fundamentalists. The only country that didn't throw up any restrictions was, you guessed it, us. The UK. Blighty. Ahh, Great Britain, the last bastion for gratuitous swearing and violence in entertainment media. Makes you proud.







aren't constrained by the necessities of the plot. If you wanted to, you could take out a shotgun and blow away a main character at any time you feel like it (when they start emitting low groans, have eyes that are blazing red and are nibbling on your forearm is usually a good time) and the game can continue. You might miss some important information, but the game will always be completable. It'll just take you longer.

It's gone green...

One of the more interesting twists to the whole story is straight out of B-movie lore. At some point in the game, you become infected by the zombie curse yourself and before long

Mary Gentle

As regular readers of PC Zone will know, one of the things I'm always campaigning for in adventure games is a well-written story. It's all well and good having top-name actors giving it their all in front of a large blue screen (or in Origin's case, on a multi-million dollar 'set' that looks like it came out of TV's futuristic game-show 'Scavengers'), but without a decent plot you might as well not bother. Fortunately, Psygnosis have brought in the talents of prominent sci-fi/fantasy author Mary Gentle, best known for her 'White Crow' series,

which includes 'Scholars And Soldiers', 'Rats And Gargoyles', 'The Architecture Of Desire' and 'Left To His Own Devices'.

Of course, no serious author would be complete without an eccentricity or two and Mary is no exception. As a protest to the practices of the Conservative government, she vowed always to wear black for as long as they were in office. Fortunately for her wardrobe, this trend doesn't look like it will have to continue for much longer.

(Above) Bloody hell, it's a Jehovah's Witness.

(Left) The town diner. Ever since the locals started feasting on the rotting carcasses of each other, no one's really been interested in the Soup Of The Day anymore.

(Above right) The entire game is set at night, partly to help create some really spookily-lit visuals and partly because these kind of tales always are.

(Right) No, it's not the cast, but the Zombieville team. You trying to get me wacked, or something?



you're also going as green as Kermit the Frog and having to use sellotape to keep your body parts from falling off. You can still continue the game as normal-(-ish) for a while, but should the zombiefication process (as indicated by a picture of your face getting ever worse) reach its final stages, then that's all folks. Luckily, there is a way to avoid this, but I've been sworn to secrecy and nothing but large bundles of cash sent to me care of PC Zone's address will make me talk.

So (have you noticed how many of these Blueprints start their final paragraph with the words, 'So' or,

'Anyway'? Still, who am I to buck a trend?), anyway, Zombieville is still in the earlier stages of development. Most of the graphics are having the finishing touches applied, and the coders are frantically working at tying all the

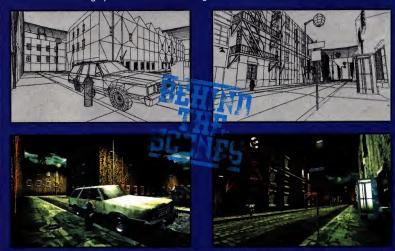
different stages together in time for the current release date of February 1997. Until then, just heed these words of warning: Don't trust anyone with red eyes, never agree to be sacrificed in the name of a demon and stay clear of people with the words Bushell and Gary in their name.

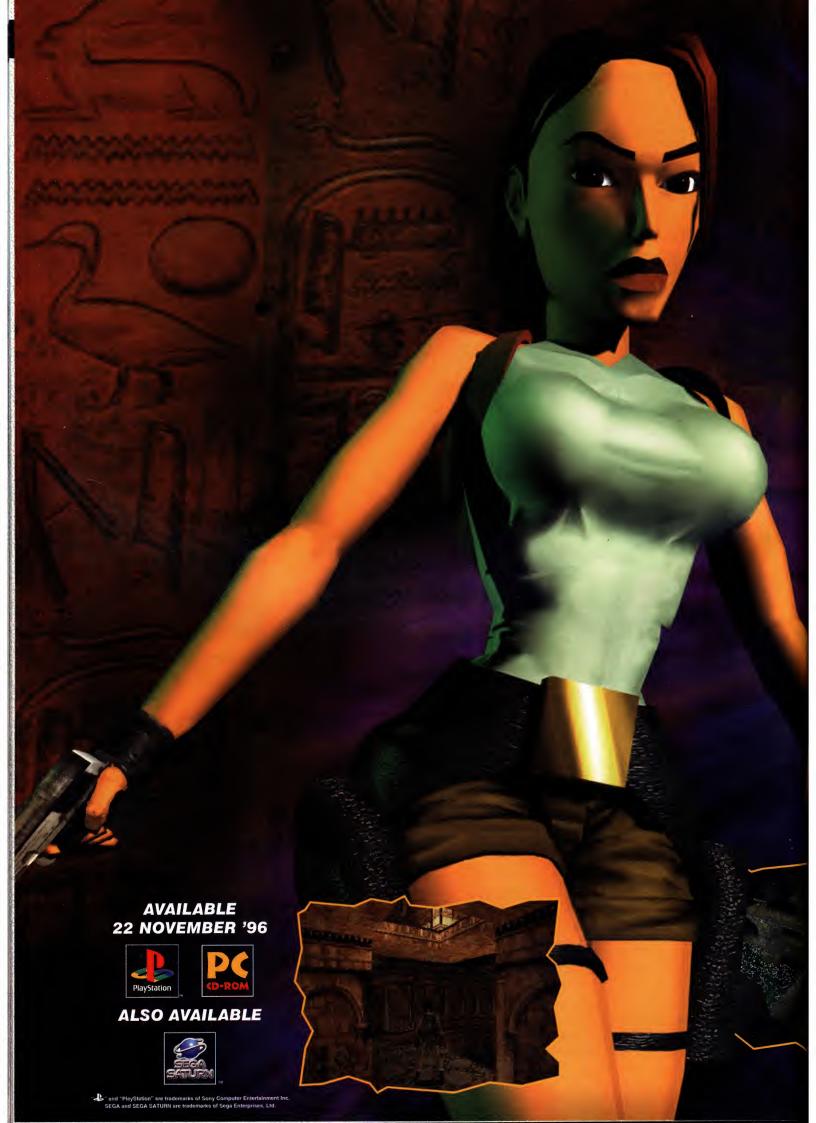
There's no real link between that last one and Zombieville, but I thought it a point worth making anyway. Z

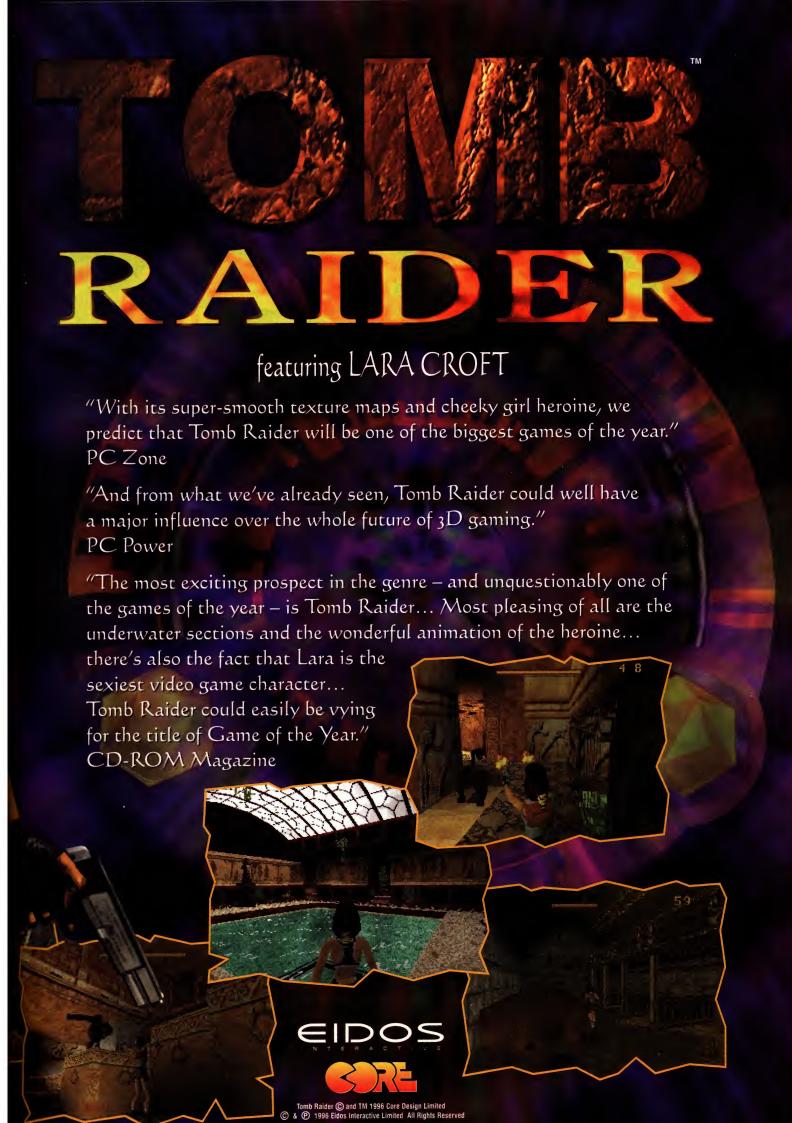


Fleshing it out... so to speak

Here you can see how each scene is first created as a basic framework based on the initial hand-drawn artwork, and is then fleshed out with colour, detail, texture-mapping and light-sourcing. Each of these backgrounds is then combined with a Z-mask to provide the three-dimensional movement information specific to that screen. Events can be triggered by the player manipulating marked scenery or by simply remaining in a particular place while something moves around him. All of the character movement is determined by something called a 'global mapping system' which helps the computer determine the most appropriate route for a character to take to get from point A to point B – eliminating the usual detours through points C to Q that other games have trouble with.







REVIEWS INTRODUCTION OZ PANOZ PANOZ



THE ZONE SCORING SYSTEM



90+ CLASSIC

The highest accolade a game can attain. A wonderful example of gaming excellence that deserves to be recognised and indeed cherished, or something.



80–89 RECOMMENDED

An excellent game that simply lacks that certain something that makes it one of the true greats. Well worth checking out, though.



20 and below PANTS

Absolutely bloody awful. Crap with a capital C. Naff with a capital N. You get the picture.



486 FRIENDLY

The DX2 is still one of the most popular spec machines, but how do you know what games will run on the thing? This icon shows you which games you can still enjoy even if you don't have a ninja Pentium.

Looking back

Flight Simulator '95

I don't want to come over all speccy twat in a flying hat, but I've got a bit of a confession to make: I've been 'playing' Flight Sim '95.

Before you condemn me as an anorak-wearing, joystick-twiddling, rudder-rubbing, FLCS f**kwit, let me explain.

First of all, I'm not your average propellor head (oh no!). As far as I'm concerned, you can



take your modern-day jet fighters and stick 'em where the sun don't shine. Gimme your WWI flight sims anyday. Wings of Glory? Loved it. Dawn Patrol? Can't wait 'til Flying Corps. EF2000 and USNF may look quite lush and feature cutting-edge technology and weaponry, but I like to hear the wings creak when I pull a fast one. I also like to take my time. Landscapes may look good at Mach 2, but you hardly have time to appreciate them when you're sonic booming about. If you stick to a steady 70mph at least you can fly the plane instead of just twinking the joystick a few millimeters. The best thing about FS95 is that you can fly loads of different planes over the whole world and crash into lots of famous landmarks. The landscapes might not be the most detailed, but at least they're 'real' and you actually feel like you're flying the planes, not just pointing them in different directions. Even if flight sims aren't normally your thang, check it out. You might just be converted.

Jeremy Wells

Sensible Football Games

A few years ago Sensible Software released a football game called *Sensible Soccer*. The Amiga version was hailed as the best football game on

any format, ever. The PC version was a bit shite compared to the Amiga classic, mainly because the players ran around at about a million miles per hour, but since there was no other footy game on the PC that was worth spending more than five seconds with, the PC gaming community took *Sensi* (as it affectionately became known) to their hearts.

Two years on, we still don't have a 'definitive' PC football game we can call our own. Considering the technical power of the PC, I find this quite astonishing. The SNES, for example, has International Superstar Soccer, an absolutely superb football game, while we're stuck with Actua Soccer and Euro 96 which, for all their graphical loveliness, are made unplayable because they're riddled with gameplay problems. Even Fifa 96, a game



ANOZ ANOZ ANOZ ANOZ REVIEWS INTRODUCTION





PROCESSOR-HUNGRY

Some games run slowly, even on high-spec machines with ninjascopic graphics cards. Just run something like Magic Carpet in hi-res on virtually any PC and you end up with something running in Jerk-o-vision.



WINDOWS 95

Speaks for itself really – if it's got this icon slapped on it, it's been designed to take advantage of all that Windows 95 offers.

90+	CLASSIC
80-89	RECOMMENDED
70-79	GOOD
50-69	AVERAGE
40-49	BELOW AVERAGE
20-39	POOR
20 and belo	DW PANTS

In perspective

This is designed to be a pure visual guide as to how games of a similar style compare to one another. The bars do not relate to previous review scores... they are simply an indication of how the reviewer feels about the products on a sliding scale.

Game 1

Game 2

Thanks this issue to

- Suzy and Paul at Eidos
- Mike Harding (Photography)
- Natalie Cook (Lara-like)
- Ingrid Navratildva (Make up/hair)
- · Nic & Skip at EA
- Brian at DMA
- Barbara 'where's that ferking copy?' Smith
- Amaya
- Thea Get Well Soon!

(Right) In *Toonstruck* it's the fish that do the battering!

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If you want any more info on Dan machines, you can call them on:

0181 830 1100
Can The People's
Choice

we had high hopes for, was a disappointment on PC, and then EA added insult to injury by producing a PlayStation version that was much better. Let's hope they redeem themselves with *Fifa 97* when we review it in the next issue.

The point I'm making here is, with the possible exception of Fifa 97 (we live in hope), there aren't any really impressive footy games on the horizon for the PC. Both Jeremy and I are football crazy (Jeremy plays CM2 to death), yet we never pull a football game out of the cupboard to play around with.

I'll end this little rant by throwing down the gauntlet to PC development teams everywhere by inviting you to write to the mag explaining why it's so difficult to produce a good football game for the PC. My hopes for a reply aren't high.

Chris Anderson

Command & Conquer

I must admit to completely missing the boat when Command & Conquer frenzy first hit the PC gaming scene over a year ago. Dunno why – never really picked up on it or had a chance to play past the first level. That was until I inquisitively installed it onto my friend's PC recently.

Now I'm addicted. Totally hooked. How the hell did I miss it the first time? The idea's a simple one –



everyone knows it, everyone's played it... except me, until now – and the graphics are pretty bloody substandard (how the hell did we fall for those dog's arse pre-rendered sequences before?), but *Command & Conquer* has that certain *je ne sais quoi* that few of its imitators possess or even care about.

Winning is not that easy either, which stands in the game's favour because, let's face it, there aren't going to be any girls playing it. Big tanks and whole infantries rushing into battle is just top, top fun, even when it all goes horribly wrong.

A few people I know have played it to death, as both armies, through every country and permutation in the game. And they still play it. Command & Conquer hasn't aged a bit.

Paul Mallinson

Cool games

We see hundreds of games over the months but there are a few that we hang on to and continue to play at lunchtime/when we're supposed to be doing more important stuff...

Tomb Raider
Creatures
F-22 Lightning II

Robotron X

Quake

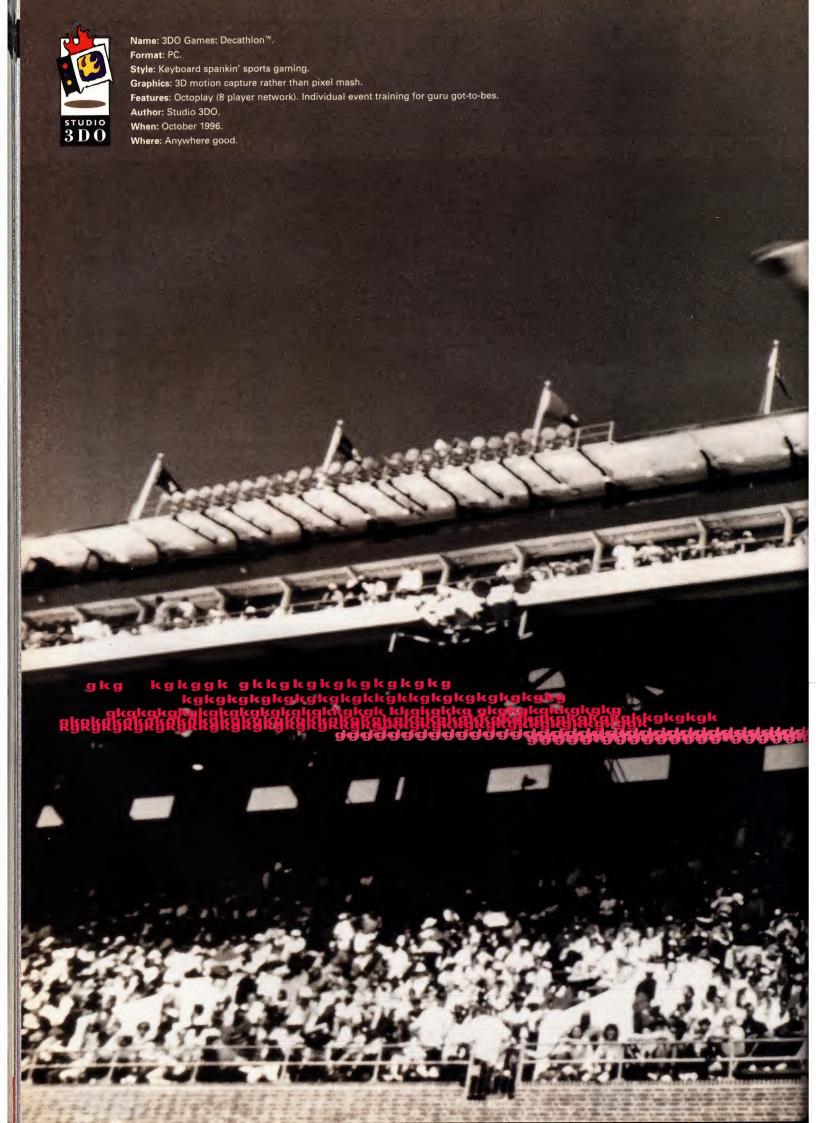
Crap games

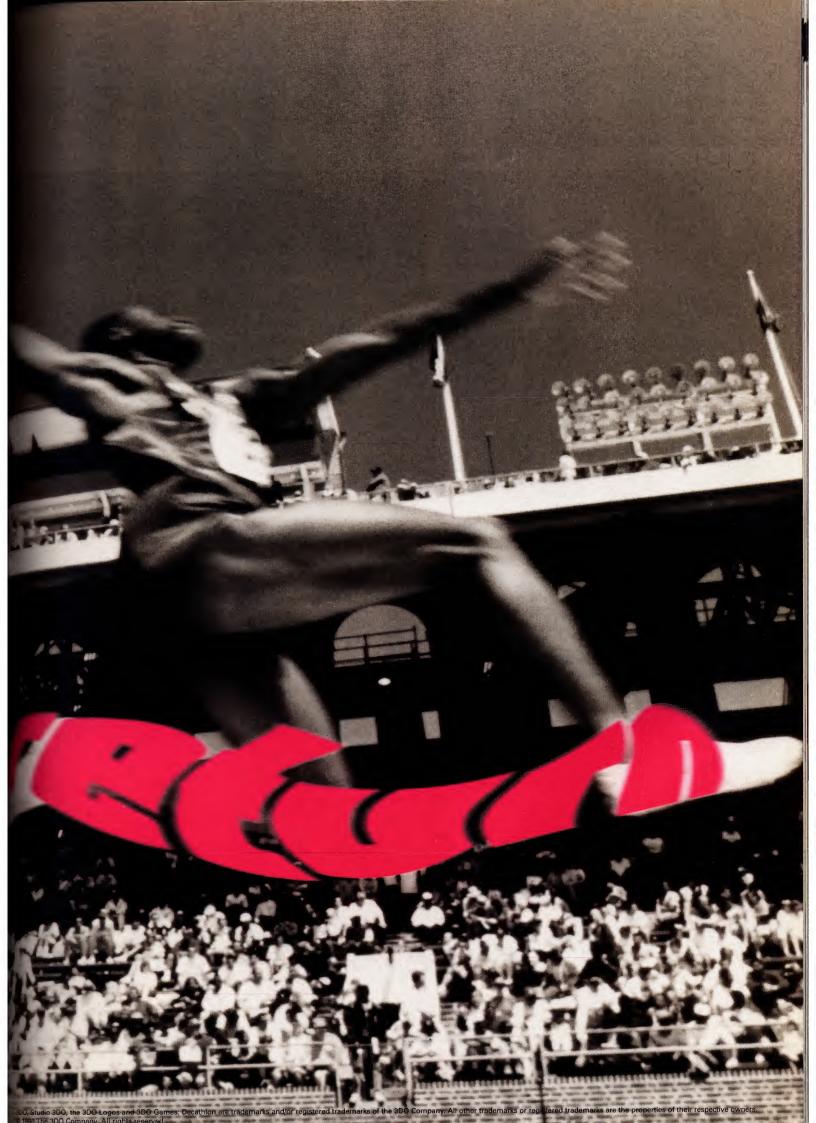
There are some games that you can leave in the middle of the room with a big sign next to them saying "please steal me" and you still can't get rid of the bloody things...

Microsoft Soccer

Olympic Soccer Microsoft Golf

Fable Orion Burger







Raider





Around Ankles'. I have made use of all the fundamental adventurer's skills, such as map reading (following indecipherable markings on photocopied party invitations), eating unusual foodstuffs for survival (living off chocolate 'Nourishment' drinks for two weeks during my student years – they contain just enough nutrients to keep you alive, and expand in your stomach so you

ard, sweet polydonal siren

don't feel hungry – although they turn your piss green), and learning foreign languages and cultures (trying to fathom what on earth women are on about half the time). So, you see, it's possible to be a bona fide explorer-type without ever leaving these shores. And now, thanks to Core Design, it's possible to be an explorer without even leaving your seat. Thanks to Tomb Raider.

Quality Street

Tomb Raider is superb. To all intents and purposes it's a platform game, very much in the *Prince Of Persia* mould, but one that makes the most of an utterly jaw-dropping 3D engine, impeccable level design, and reams of high-quality animation, producing a gaming

experience so engrossing and rewarding that it can justifiably be labelled an instant classic. The plot revolves around some hoo-hah with an artefact that's been split into pieces, leaving you to take control of a Ms Lara Croft – round 'fit bird' – as she tries to find all the bits and put them back together. To do series of immense, labyrinthine levels, jampacked with puzzles, perils, and more than a few Although the screenshots may imply that it's an

(Top left) Some of the architecture is prettier than Lara herself (if you're Prince Charles).

(Above left) She's a strapping young lass.

LARA-LIKE BY MIKE HARDING

Animal Tragic

There are so many different animals appearing in *Tomb Raider* that you half expect Sir David Attenborough to pop up on the soundtrack. He'd no doubt have something to say about the way Lara guns 'em down if he did, mind. Your ears will be ringing with the sound of furry corpses biting the dust while you're playing this. I reckon that Lara Croft is secretly moonlighting for a firm of taxidermists – and that she gets a commission for every animal corpse she procures for them.

Speaking of animal-stuffing, I once thought up a really good title for a *Carry On* film set in a taxidermist's office. It was called *Carry On Mounting Dead Animals*. If only they'd made that instead of that shitty *Columbus* effort.





« Alone In The Dark clone, the reality is markedly different. For starters, the camera moves along behind you from a floating perspective, switching position only when totally necessary. It's a 'proper' 3D game. The (Above right) There are bumloads of sneaky switches waiting to be flicked...

(Right) What a fine figure of a woman.



accurate comparison is with *Mario 64* on the new Nintendo system.

One of the first things that strikes you is the quality and speed of the animation. Despite having to hurl huge pieces of scenery and light-sourcing about in the background, Core's engine somehow finds room for over 3000 frames of animation in the main character. Lara walks, runs, leaps, somersaults, climbs, slides and dives in a manner so eerily realistic that you can't help becoming rather overfond of her (indeed, I've already written her a love poem reprinted elsewhere in this article). You know how sometimes you'll play a game that's so visually impressive and convincing that you find yourself performing the same action a couple of times just because it looks so cool each time you do it? You'll be doing that all the time in Tomb Raider. Those of you with upper-class Pentiums will be able to enjoy a stunning high-resolution mode, but even on the lowest of

detail settings, it's



the majority of the screenshots on these pages were 'taken' in low-res mode, so you can see for yourself that I ain't no bloody liar, right? Right. So, it looks good. But how does the gameplay measure up?

Put On Your 3D Glasses Now

Now, imagine you had to design a 3D platform game. Yes, you there. Put your thinking cap on for a moment and try to picture it in your mind's eye. Okay?

Finished? Good. Now let's examine what you thought about.

No doubt you pictured something along the lines of *Sonic The Hedgehog*, or – if you're cool, *Chuckie Egg* – that is, something with lots of 'floating platforms' in it, but from a sort of 3D perspective. That's what the



Tales from the Crypt

 $^\prime$ Here's a snatch of storyboard-tastic action that should give you some idea of how Tomb Raider's gameplay works...



Here I am at the start of level three
 The Lost Valley. And would you look at my arse? Phwoar. Coooaargh.
 Gumph. They love it really. Etc, etc.



Aha – a flowing stream. I'm not going to dive in just yet though. I fancy a quick look around first.



Doh! While attempting to leap across the water, I screwed up and fell in. And there's a strong current that's carrying me rapidly to God knows where...



The stream's turned into a waterfall. Not that I'm scared. No, I'm dead hard me. Not to mention graceful... just look at that dive.



• Good news: there was a large pool at the bottom of the waterfall. Bad news: there's a couple of wolves patrolling the perimeter. Time to drag myself out and get a bit handy with the old pistols.



• That's it. Good doggy. Play dead, now. There's a good boy. Another successful graduate from the Smith and Wesson Obedience School.



Hmm. I reckon I can climb up the side there and get back to the top of the waterfall...



Clambering over a rock on my way to the top. Rather an artful picture, don't you think? From the Razzle school of photography.



• Having successfully leapt across the stream on my second attempt, I explore the area and discover a set of cogs on the wall. There seem to be a few missing. My guess is that I've got to find the missing cogs and put 'em in position.



A little more exploration reveals an emaciated victim of the Nigel Lawson diet plan. He seems to have dropped a shotgun beside him. Time for a little thievery...



No prizes for guessing which knucklehead went and fell in the stream again. I'm starting to get a little over-familiar with this bloody waterfall.



2 Down at the bottom of the waterfall, I decide to do a little more exploring and run into *another* pack of wolves round the corner. A little gunplay later, and it's all over for the canine contingent. 0!! Rolf Harris! Stick that in yer Animal Hospital...



It all seems to be a bit of a cul-desac down here. There's got to be somewhere I can go...



Aha... I reckon I can probably make it up there...



Oh, look at all the bony people. Clambering to the top reveals another dead feller. That first aid kit isn't going to be much use to him, so I'll swipe it and carry on moving...



I pass through an opening, landing in a grassy area... and before you can say 'aaargh', a cute lil dinosaur tries to bite me. Much gunfire later, and he curls up into a ball and goes to sleep. Forever.



This must be the 'Lost Valley' then. There's probably some more dinosaurs down here. Ha. I am not afraid. I am superwoman. I am Racquel Welch in 1 Million Years BC.



That looks like a large set of footprints on the floor. It's either a very big dinosaur or someone wearing a pair of oversized comedy slippers.



Enter very big dinosaur, stage right.
I skip backwards and prepare to blow him to kingdom come with my new shotgun...



...but end up doing a convincing impression of a length of dental floss instead. Game over, man. Sorry, game over, woman.

Sexism corner

Jo Guest? Pah – a common tuppeny strumpet. Kathy Lloyd? Mutton dressed as lamb. Cindy Crawford? Got a mole like a bulletwound. Kate Moss? Kate Carcass, more like. The Spice Girls? Don't get me started...

Lara Croft, that's where it's at, mate. Does your body contain testosterone? Then I guarantee you're going to fall head over heels for her. Not only does she have a figure to die for (I've heard a couple of women comment jealously on her slender waist and comely thighs), she's also extremely supple and sassy. And her voice... ahhhhh. It doesn't suit her really – it's a sort of faintly-upper-class *Blue Peter* presenter, jolly hockey sticks sort of a voice – but it doesn't half grow on you. Her boundless enthusiasm. Her wide-eyed

wholesome English girly-ness, colliding with hardbitten John Woo-style gunplay. I reckon she swallows. She's the perfect woman. (Except for her tits, which are shaped like triangles.)

« aforementioned Mario 64 is like. It's slick, it's frighteningly playable, but its landscape is very 'gamelike', very disjointed and surreal. Not so Tomb Raider. Tomb Raider's environment is utterly believable. You clamber over huge chunks of rubble. Climb huge clifffaces. Leap ravines. Dangle from ropebridges. Swim through underground tunnels. And it's all completely believable. Architecturally, it's often

stunning.
Better yet is
the design of
the levels
themselves. They
really are designed
as puzzles, with each
requiring a
combination of hard
thought and
gaming

Rather than lead the player by the nose through each challenge, the game also requires an

instinct for exploration. Many's the time you'll find yourself seemingly at a dead-end, only to discover that there's a whole new section of the level tucked away behind an (almost) hidden entrance. There are keys to collect, switches to pull and secret bonus areas to be uncovered. Countless perilous surprises – in the form of vicious ancient booby traps – lurk around every other corner – from huge swinging axes, to the faithful 'pit of spikes'. It keeps you on your toes throughout, in other words.

And I haven't even mentioned how large the levels are yet. Here we have a textbook example of 'getting your money's worth'. Tomb Raider is huge. They could've released it with half the number of levels and it would still be a great game. A single level will often require hours of play. Everything's finely tuned so that, just as you're getting frustrated, you manage to solve the problem that was vexing you and move on, with mounting enthusiasm. But it doesn't end there. Because there's guns in it too.

Gym Gyminny Gym Gyminny Gym Gym Gyreee

Those nice people at Core are a thoughtful lot. They don't want you running around a dangerous tomb packed with death, peril, and yet more death unless you've had a little preparation first. To this end, they've included a 'practice' area, selectable from the main menu at the start of the game. Choose this option and you'll find yourself running around Lara's house (in true explorer tradition, it's a bloody big mansion). Here you'll learn how to perform some of her trickier manoeuvres while the lady herself talks you through them. Oooh, it's that voice again...





In Perspective

Tomb Raider really is quite unique as far as PC games go at the moment, but it shares elements of each of the following... and pisses all over them.

Tomb Raider

Prince of Persia

Fade to Black

Alone in the Dark





Old MacDonald had a gun

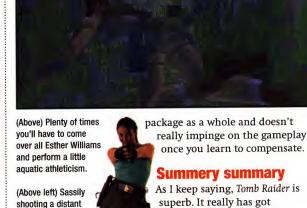
Now we British are 'a nation of animal lovers'. Not so Lara Croft. If you've got four legs, and you spot her coming toward you, run away. Quickly. In Tomb Raider most of your foes hail from the animal kingdom. Wolves, lions, crocodiles, gorillas – even dinosaurs. Now, you could deal with these opponents the Doctor Dolittle way and try to sing them into submission, but that would lead to some pretty dreadful operatics and more than a little clawthrough-face action. Your best bet is to shoot them with guns. Lara appears to be something of a handgun fetishist, and is equally at home with a pair of Uzis as she is with a shotgun or magnum. She has no qualms at all about gunning down endangered species left, right and centre. I shudder to think what would happen if she were let loose in Whipsnade Zoo.

What's more, the animals are wonderfully animated themselves, and are so pretty that you don't really want

> to shoot them. Several people have watched me playing this over my shoulder, and the first thing out of their mouths (after they'd commented on the general 'wow!' factor of the visuals), was a

disapproving 'Awww, what did you do that for?' when they saw me shooting a beastie. Rest assured that later on in the game, it's humans and weird monsters that start getting it in the neck - and no-one ever goes 'awww' over them, eh?

Actually, combat is the one section of Tomb Raider that could do with just a little improvement. Lara automatically aims on your behalf, but things can get a little confusing whenever there's more than one enemy. Most of the time you'll find yourself jumping around in a very peculiar fashion in the middle of a firefight, as you frantically try to avoid the fangs of your attackers. Perhaps some kind of first-person view, or maybe a crosshair for the shoot-outs, would have done the trick, but maybe this would just confuse things. Either way, it's a minor niggle given the quality of the



shooting a distant bad guy.

(Left) He may be 'born free', but he ain't going to be breathing free in a moment.

(Far left) There are keys

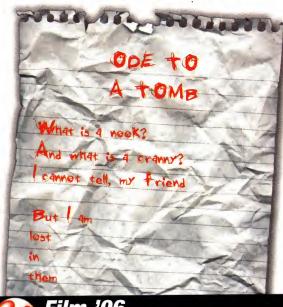
to be discovered.

once you learn to compensate. Summery summary As I keep saying, Tomb Raider is superb. It really has got 'something for everyone'.

Arcade fans will love the exceptional platform-style gameplay (and the triggerhappy combat). Puzzle freaks will love the mazes and problems. Adventure addicts will love the

exploration and slowly-unravelled storyline. All three will love the everpresent element of surprise. Cybertwats will love the standard-setting visuals. Female players will love Lara. Male players will love Lara more, for foul and dirty reasons. And last but not least, the accountants at Eidos will love it because it'll no doubt set tills nationwide ringing like a red alert in a bell factory.

It deserves no less. It's an instant classic. Try it. You'll like it. I loved it. Z



The action in *Tomb Raider* is occasionally punctuated by some really rather dazzling FMV sequences, which...

a) help to develop the storyline and b) give you yet another chance to ogle at Lara's all-encompassing loveliness. They're interesting, well-thoughtout, and most important of all, they never get in the way of the action. A hearty round of applause for that.



lech specs

Memory: 8 MB RAM

Processor: Pentium

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster & compatibles

Controls: Keyboard/Mouse/Gamepad

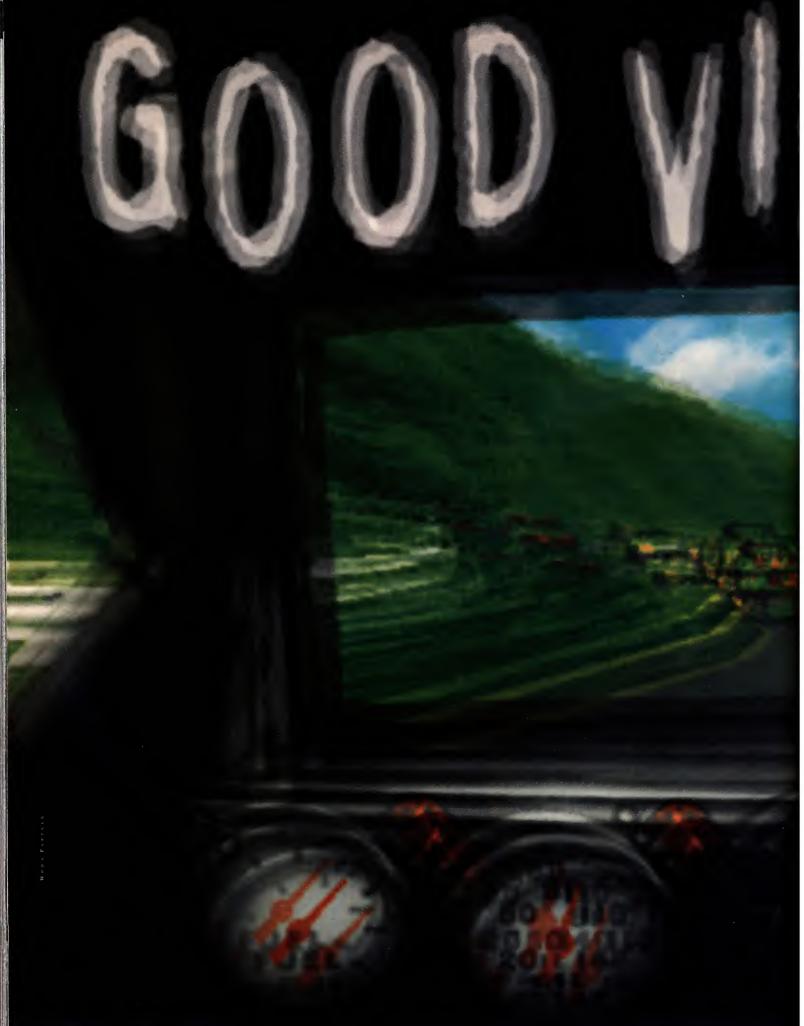
Score



from Core.

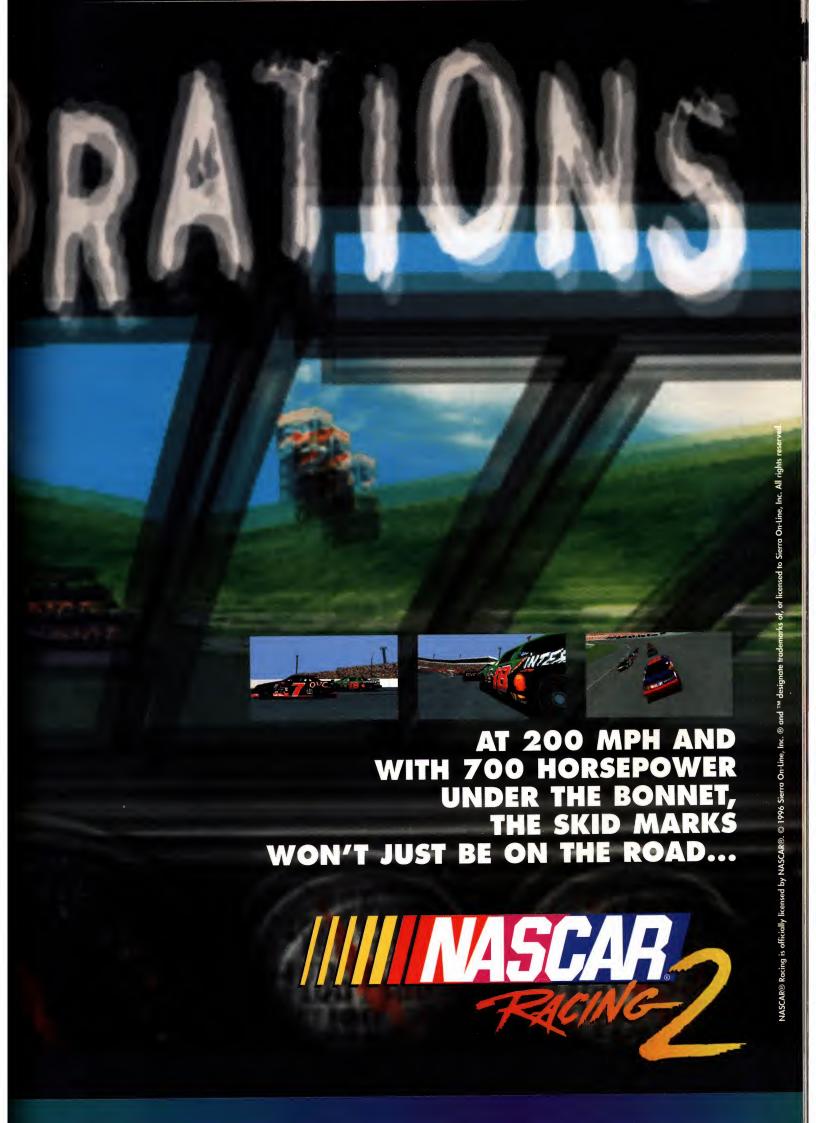
Price: £44.95 Release Date: Out now Publisher: Core Design/EIDOS Tel: 0181 780 2222







S I E R R A ®



lechWarrior 2: It's a new MechWarrior Mercenarie

game. Or is it a data disk? **Patrick McCarthy has** absolutely no idea.

E'VE HAD MECHWARRIOR 2. We've had the data disk . that brought 12 new missions, some new death-dealing machines and a bit more texturing to your world. We've had the other data disk that brought you 15 multiplayer missions, eight-player LAN games and modem linkups. Now, we've got the all-new (cough) game. Well, sort of. What they've actually done is made it all a bit more amoral - they've dumped all that pseudo-mystical crap about the

Clans and the honourable way.

because it was only slightly less

Which, let's face it, is good news,

interesting than watching impetigo spread. (That's as in "the spread of impetigo" - not as in some new and rather unpleasant snack that's consumed on a slice of bread and butter.)

Instead, we have a new approach. As the name suggests, you

> are encouraged to abandon your high ideals and your name with a lot of Thggths in it, and go all out for the

greenbacks. Although, since this all still takes place in the distant future, the backs may be another

to stomp about in your oversized washing machine and blow things up, but means you also have to keep an eye on the purse strings; Mercenary allows you to join a mercenary army and let missions and contracts be decided for you, while you hopefully earn enough to start an unprincipled army of your own - either that, or set yourself up with a security firm like all the other ex-mercenaries. As well as the career modes, there's also an option to play games over the network or via a modem; while Instant Action drops you somewhere dark and scary and lets you hammer away at stuff with the Mech, weapons and mission type of your choice.

C-Bill shoot. Shoot Bill, shoot.

The financial side of things does make a difference to the game. Being

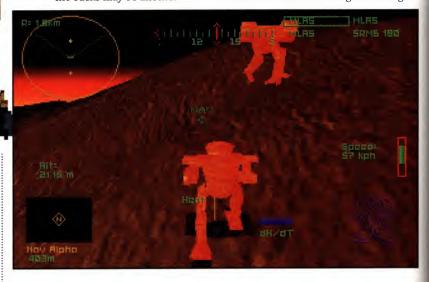






(Left) Vanity is sure to be his downfall as your MechWarrior rushes up for a full frontal shot.

(Right) "Oi lobsterhead! I told you we'd need at least Factor 15."



colour entirely for all I know. Whatever. Dosh is the word. Sponds are your creed. Moolah is your - (We get the picture - Ed.)

Careering about

The start-up menu gives you two choices for a single-player career mode: Mercenary Commander means you get

a Commander has its obvious upside you get to think up a really silly name for your army; and downside - all that responsibility. You have to make sure that you pick your contracts carefully: most contractors pay "all reasonable ammunition expenses"; all pay a fixed fee; most provide a

Windows 95 - The Gamer's Saviour. And other fascinating facts...

- Mercenaries runs in DOS or in Windows 95. In DOS it needs 8Mb RAM; in Win95 it needs 16Mb twice as much RAM to run the game by clicking on an icon rather than typing a DOS command.
- A full installation requires 150Mb of hard disk space, plus 10Mb for virtual memory.
- O The game runs in 320 x 200; 640 x 480 and 1024 x 768 resolution. In 640 x 480, on a P90 with 16Mb RAM, the external camera view moved with all the smoothness of an arthritic ball-and-socket joint. In the manual, they recommend using 320 x 200 unless you have a P150 or above. Okey-doke.



He flies like a bird in the sky-y-y-y...

This version of the game has jump jets in it. Jump jets are cool. Jump jets allow great big fat heavy battlemechs to leap skywards in a single bound. It's a bit like a hi-tech version of the hippos in Fantasia except that instead of having spindly little crocodiles underneath waiting to catch them, there are enemy Mechs. Enemy Mechs with extremely vulnerable heads. Heads that are a lot weaker than your Mech's legs. There's also a camera view that lets you look directly below your Mech. Is the vaguest inkling of an idea for a new plan of attack forming



In Perspective

There are lots of Mech games around on the PC. The original MechWarrior was the first, this latest version is the best to date.

Mech Warrior 2: Mercenaries

Mech Warrior 2

Earth Siege 2

Krazy Ivan

drop ship; some don't let you have any salvage rights. This isn't exactly a task fraught with difficulty, but you might have a few options open. And you do have to keep an eye on what you're spending during missions.

You can't even mess about too much when you're customising your Mech, because you have to pay for labour charges. You start with a million "c-bills" and there's a monthly account, detailing battlemechs maintenance costs, paying technicians' salaries and even Guild dues. (I had no idea that mercenaries had Guilds.) But the Commander route is the more

interesting, as the solo mercenary stuff is too much like the previous version of the game. And that would make it a data disk.

Faffing for fun and profit

There's still the obligatory faffing about, juggling a load of armaments to ensure that the Mechs don't exceed their maximum weight. Most of the problem is rooted in the fact that they're supposed to look like big people. A Mech is the kind of robotic warrior that can only take a certain amount of weight - and loads of it is taken up with stuff you neither want nor need. I mean, what would you rather have on your monstrous killing machine a long, extremely heavy and entirely useless arm, with shoulder, upper arm and lower arm "actuators" and a gigantic hand, all of which weighs about six million tons... or a gigantic megagun that weighs less and is a lot more use? They don't put arms on tanks, do they... and for a very good reason. How often are you likely to want to wave to someone? Or hold hands? These are supposed to be death-dealing bastards, not bloody social workers.



(Above) Time to watch vour MechWarrior spontaneously combust (and lose the game).

Anyway...

Anyway, that's about it. It's certainly another MechWarrior game, but this time there's a healthy bit of cynicism about it.

MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries may have three levels of difficulty to gently ease you into the action, but even at the easiest setting, you still need to be pretty darned quick with the multiple button pressing, joystick and/or mouse twiddling and keyboard whacking. Either that, or pretty quick with the Load Saved Game button. Z

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb (16Mb for Windows 95)

Processor: 486/66 (P90 recommended)

Graphics: VGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, ThrustMaster/CH

Score



It' good - but you could still argue about the data disk bit...

Price: £44.99 Release Date: Out now **Publisher:** Activision Tel: 0181-742 9400





The earth is flat... sometimes

You can disguise it with night-time scenes, you can incorporate all the fog you like, and you can make the ground beneath your feet as rutted-looking as a particularly sexy ewe after the mating season, but all the texture-mapping in the world won't disguise the fact that many of the planets you visit are completely flat with some lumps here and there. They could have been designed by The Flat Earth Society. Meanwhile, others seem to be trying out that new-fangled 'realistic terrain' they've heard so much about from other games. Weird. It's like they couldn't be bothered to give proper ground to all the missions, or something.

(Above left) Forget guns, a daily baked bean diet will produce spectacular butt bombs.



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M.A.X. is a game featuring the item(s) above — Interplay do not really sell weapons of global destruction. We will not supply bombs, tanks or fighters to anyone (even if you are over 18 with a full driving licence). But you can have IREF femo.



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Master Of Orion

Chris Anderson, poor misguided soul that he is, reckons he's Master Of Orion. Now, thanks to Microprose's fab sequel, you can be Master Of Orion 2.

EFORE WE START, LET'S HAVE A little chat about the original Master Of Orion game. Have you played it? If your answer is 'yes', you'll no doubt agree with me that it was bloody complicated and difficult to get into. Hopefully, you'll also agree with me that once you got well into it, you'd no longer describe it as complicated, but rather as (puts on insufferably pretentious voice) 'sophisticated'. If, on the other hand, you haven't played it at all, you'll no doubt be completely in the dark as to the hidden delights the original had stored in its sophisticated insides. Well, never fear, because this fantastic sequel has something for both experienced Orion fans and newcomers alike. In fact, it has a hell of a lot to offer to anyone who cares to spend time with it. But be warned, 'time' is the keyword here. Let me explain...

Who, what, where?...

If you're looking for a game you can pick up and play straightaway, you've come to the wrong place. There is a tutorial, which comes in the form on an on-line help system, but to be honest, you'll probably just confuse yourself by reading this stuff for ages. But tell you what, I've just had a fantastic idea. I've played the game to death and consider







myself to be more or less au fait with every aspect of the game, so prepare yourself now for a one-off, never to be repeated, absolute bargain offer (it's free): the PC Zone Master Of Orion 2 tutorial. I'm going to hold your hand and take you through the early stages of see if it's your type of game. Here we go:

the game. Hopefully, this way you'll learn a bit more about it and be able to

1 Choose a race and check out the

planet you

start off

with.

Make

sure

you've got

is what this game is all about, and look, here's one we made earlier. (Bottom left) Access the tech review screen and gloat over all the fancy

> (Bottom right) The combat screen. You and the enemy take it in turns to bash the shit out of each other.

new things you've

researched.

enough food. Use your colony ship to create a colony on another planet. 2 Chances are high that your new planet doesn't have enough food. Research a hydrophonic farm (build these on all your planets, surplus food is automatically used for planets with a food shortage).

3 At the beginning, your ships can't travel far because they're using the wrong fuel. Research Uridium fuel cells. 4 Sooner or later, you'll come into enemy contact. Start researching better weaponry. Don't attack anyone until you've done this or you'll get stuffed. 5 Don't attack the Anterans of The Guardian until your ships are mega-powerful.



Well, that's up to you really. The beauty of Master Of Orion 2 is you can play it any way you want. You'll »





probably spend a lot of time at the beginning just researching stuff, recruiting new staff (these are called leaders, they enhance your fighting abilities and research speed and stuff like that) and generally just getting used to how the game works. Whatever you're doing, prepare yourself for the inevitability that at some point you'll realise you've got everything wrong and need to start again. These kind of games are just like that, really, and for me that's part of the fun, because when you start again knowing exactly what to do it makes you even more eager to get into the whole thing. Or maybe I'm just a sad git. However, there is one element that may not be to everyone's taste...

Aaargh, it's turn-based!

This alone will be enough to turn some people off. However, if you take the time

to research your weapons to the point

that all your ships are suitably scary, you'll find the combat sections

very rewarding (if not incredibly

things instead. Like I said, this game has 'something for everyone'. Incidentally, I'm not

trying to put you off the battle scenes, it's just

that I realise that

some people don't

thinking required to get the most out of turn-based combat.

undoubtedly be more at

home with something like

fully 'appreciate'

These people will

the strategic

exciting). Failing that, you can just

choose the 'auto-battle' option and let the computer take care of

(Left) Make friends with lots of alien races. Or do the sensible thing and kick the shit out of the lot of them.

(Right) At the start of the game you have to choose your race from one of this lot. Don't blame us, we didn't write the game.

(Bottom) Blimey, it's the Kilrathi, you know, that lot from Wing Commander. What the hell are they doing here? (Shut up - Ed.)

















Command & Conquer. Now it's time for the 'plot'.

The universe is mine

Actually, it's not, it belongs to a race called the Anterans. Your objective in

People to meet, things to do, you know...

Interaction with other races in Orion 2 is not simply a matter of contacting them and asking them if they want to be friends or not. Yes, you can form alliances with them, but you can also do really sneaky things at the same time, ike spying, for example. Once you've got a couple of spies you can send them off to find out what the other races are up to, or even sabotage one of their planets, it's fab. Unless you get caught. In which case the race you've just wound up will get on your case big-time, as will any other races that they've got alliances with. If you're going to take the old back-stabbing approach, make sure you've got spies that charge a lot of money. At least then you'll know that they're pretty good at what they're doing, and so are far less likely to get caught. You can also swap technology with other races. This can be particularly beneficial if you're researching something really big that's going to take a bloody age to come to fruition, as you can simply get it by swapping one of your naff technologies for it with one of the other race suckers! Another particularly cool feature in Orion 2 is the option to have planets build stuff for you automatically. The auto-build function will decide what your planet needs most and build if for you. You won't want to do this at the beginning of the game (especially if you're following my handy little tutorial) but in the later stages of the game, when you've got a hundred things to do and a hundred planets to manage, you'll find the auto-build feature is a godsend.

the game is rid the universe of these dictating rotters. There are two ways you can do this: you can either wait until you're suitably well-equipped to attack the Anterans in their own sector of space, or you can eliminate all the other races in the game. If you go for the latter, you will automatically become ruler of all known space, and all your friends will refer to you as being 'the best' and hold parties in your honour. Another major player in the great scheme of things is a bloke called The Guardian. This scary dude is protector of Orion. If you defeat him, Orion will be yours. This is a particularly cool thing to happen because Orion is mineral-rich, food-rich, and just generally groovy. Top tip: don't go anywhere near him unless you've got more nuclear weapons than you can shake an intergalactic stick at or you'll get your come-uppance.

So what have we got? Well, we've got a game with more stuff to research in it than I've ever seen in a game of its type. We've got a game that changes in scope the further you get into it. We've got a game that's addictive almost to the point of frustration (you know you want to go out and have a life but that research break-through is just round the corner so you can't). Basically, it's a winner. If you liked the first game, you'll absolutely adore this. It's bigger and better than its nearest rivals (Ascendancy, for example, and even Civ 2 to a lesser extent). Don't be fooled by the somewhat dated graphics. If you've a liking for a strategy game that will have you burning the midnight oil, Master Of Orion 2 is for you. Z

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb (16Mb for Windows 95)

Processor: P60

Graphics: SVGA Vesa

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Mouse

Score



Goodby life, hello Orion 2

Price: TBC Release Date: End November Publisher: Microprose Tel: 01454 893893





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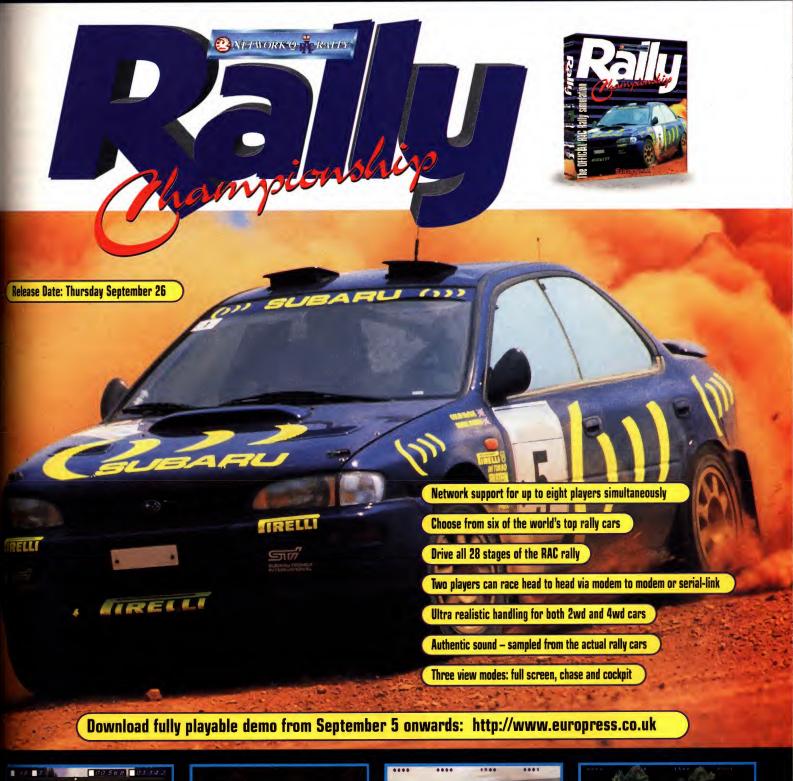
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Toonstruck



A spiritual successor to Sam & Max, but not developed by LucasArts? Has John Davison gone mad? He's been playing Virgin's latest point-and-clicker for rather longer than is healthy now.

oes anyone remember that bloody awful film where the cartoonist bloke got sucked into his own creation and ended up desperately trying to shag Kim Basinger? No? It was pretty bad, and as a result I have clearly blocked out the awful memory by refusing to be able to remember the name. Oh well... Still, this is vaguely relevant because for some reason Virgin's new in-house development team 'Burst' has chosen to steal the idea for its first project.

Doesn't bode well really, does it?

There's been a mumbling of hype burbling away about Toonstruck for nearly a year now, but for some reason no-one has really been jumping up and down and shouting about it. It looks nice and it's got some famous names associated with it, but it's got 'that' storyline... so when the review copy of



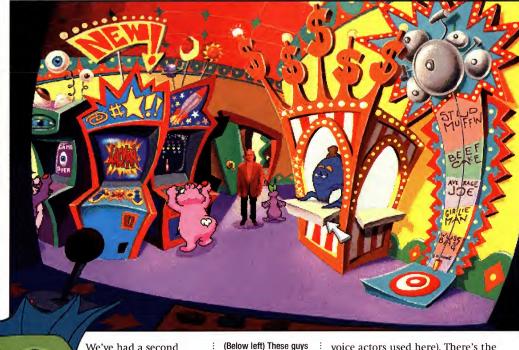
seemed to care. Fools! Fools, I say. Er...

the game showed up no-one really

Point-and-click adventures are enjoying a bit of a renaissance at the moment.







We've had a second
Discworld, Vic Tokai's
Gene Machine, Virgin's
rather po-faced (but
still super) Broken
Sword and now
this. All of them
have upped the
stakes when it
comes to
presentation and

excellent stories with almost cinematic production values. So why does this particular review have such a dirty great big number slapped on the end of it, then?

all of them have

To me, Sam & Max was one of the finest games ever produced. It was fab. It was funny. It looked good and it was just about the right level of difficulty. Nothing has even come close to it since in my book and I always thought that if anything did, the only thing that could would be a sequel. Wrong.

If anything, *Toonstruck* is something of a spiritual successor to *Sam & Max*. It takes the same cartoon-inspired ideas and characterisations and throws in a massive amount of visual humour. It also somehow manages to appeal to people on different levels in the

Homer Simpson's voice is one of the

same way that things like 'The Muppets' and 'The Simpsons' can (which is ironic because the bloke who does

answer to Ren & Stimpy and spend the entire game 'beating the livin' crap outta each other' (to quote them exactly). (Bottom left) The palace

are Toonstruck's

guards are two of the most nauseatingly cute characters you will ever come across in a computer game. They even sing to you... yuck!

(Below right) This chap is B.B. Wolf – that's 'Big Bad' – and he's the perpetrator of the aforementioned 'testes' joke. He also manages to get the word 'snatch' into conversation and make it sound extremely rude... twice. What a guy.

voice actors used here). There's the basic, silly, slapstick stuff that kids will enjoy, but underneath there's some seriously rude adult references that are thrown in so subtly that some people just won't notice. Things like cows dressed in leather S&M gear with their udders pierced whilst being whipped by a sheep dressed in spandex with little propellers attached to its nipples. You know, subtle stuff like that.

So is it for kids or adults, then?

In the first five or ten minutes of playing the thing you'd be forgiven for thinking that *Toonstruck* was aimed squarely at the kids. The storyline is all fluffy and lovely and the early puzzles are nothing more than 'talk to this person and then pick up the item that they give you' affairs. Later on, though, the game develops at an almost perfect pace – the puzzle structure becomes more complicated and the degree of



In Perspective

There are many point-and-click adventures that claim to be humorous, but only a handful that are actually genuinely amusing. Of these, Sam & Max has traditionally been the best, but now Toonstruck is vying for the top... it's just as funny – and it's a much bigger game.

Toonstruck

Sam & Max

Gene Machine

Full Throttle

Day of the Tentacle

lateral thinking that has to be applied increases. It's all, ooh I dunno, really 'clever'. It's just one of those games that sucks you in because of the subtlety of the whole thing. Before you know it, you've skipped past the simple kids stuff and you're engrossed in the middle of a multi-faceted puzzle that is actually pretty damn hard. The thing is, though, the game got you there by gently massaging your ego with the introduction of puzzles at a really



Cutopia is a soft, squidgy and lovely place full of happy, fluffy and friendly creatures at first... that is, until the Malevolator comes by and turns everyone into sadomasochistic sexual perverts. Like this sheep and this cow.





(Below left) Malevoland is a much darker and more sinister place than Cutopia, and it has some pretty ugly looking bouncers.

(Bottom) The integration of the digitised graphics with the hand-drawn backdrops is superb. The exercise machine here is probably the best illustration of this.

steady rate and then rewarding you with short but poignant developments to the overall story.

Beyond the almost graceful structure of the game, I have to mention the control system at this point. Over the years, developers of point-and-clickers have been striving for the ultimate user interface. LucasArts pretty much had the whole thing licked with the proprietary scumm system, but I reckon that Toonstruck's is near as dammit perfect. The ultimate interface has to be incredibly simple and what we have here is an intelligent icon system that simply allows for three different actions; look, pick up and then a generic 'use' action. And what more could you want from a game? Using this, coupled with a 'hot spot' system in each of the scenes where you can only manipulate certain objects, your interaction with the environment is both simple and effective.

Blimey... it's good, then

Christ. I've really got to get my 'picky' hat out now, haven't I? So far I don't think I've found anything that particularly annoys me. Let me think... good story, check; good puzzles, check; good interface, oh, done that; skip cutscenes, yup; jump from screen to screen without walking, yussa; skip long, boring conversations, ya absolutely; knob jokes, well sort of...

On top of all this, it has to be said that this really is a beautiful looking game. The cartoon-style graphics are simply superb and the integration of the digitised Christopher Lloyd with the hand-drawn backdrops is second to none. Check out the screen shot of Jim's Gym and you'll see Christopher Lloyd working out on a cartoon exercise



machine and the whole thing is pretty much seamless.

So, er... wow, it's pretty good, then? The only thing that will let it down is if you love point-and-clickers but you hate vaguely puerile, childish humour. Let's face it, though, there can't be many people like that, can there? You'd have to be the sort of person who hates 'The Simpsons' (I believe there are some) to be like that. Anyway, I love it – which must mean I'm vaguely childish and puerile too. C'est la vie. Z



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: DX2/66

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse

Score



Subtle gameplay and fab graphics. Great!

Price: £44.99 Release Date: Out now Publisher: Virgin Interactive

dan 76



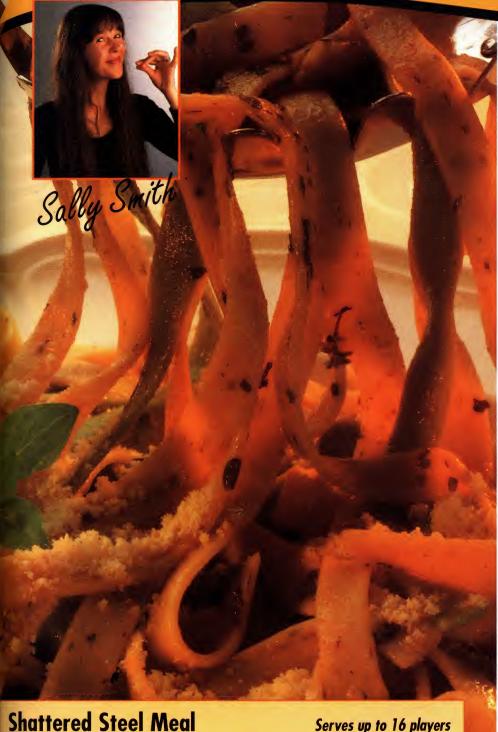
Fluffy wuffy cutie story

Rather than boring you by droning on and on about the story in the main review I thought I'd quickly sum it up here. You play the part of Drew Blanc (acted out rather effectively by a 'real' Christopher Lloyd), an ailing cartoonist who has spent the past years drawing the 'Fluffy Fluffy Bun Bun' show – a truly revolting kids 'cute' cartoon. Whilst poring over a new project for his boss, Drew nods off and for some bizarre reason gets sucked into a cartoon land that's divided into three distinctly different areas; Cutopia (where all of the disgustingly cute stuff lives), Zanydu (where the really weird stuff happens... you know, 'Ren & Stimpy'-style freaky violence) and finally the Malevolands, where all of the screwed-up nastiness occurs.

It seems that within this weird world, the forces of the Malevolands are intent on taking over completely and are turning everything 'malevolent' by zapping it with a contraption called the 'malevolator'. You are still paying attention, aren't you? This 'malevolator' basically turns things 'bad' and is an excellent vehicle for humour... er, if you'll pardon the pun.

Anyway, Drew is convinced by King Hugh of Cutopia to stop this and has to go around collecting pieces for an 'anti-malevolator' called a 'cutiefier'. Thus the adventure begins... Got that?

MMmm! Delicious!



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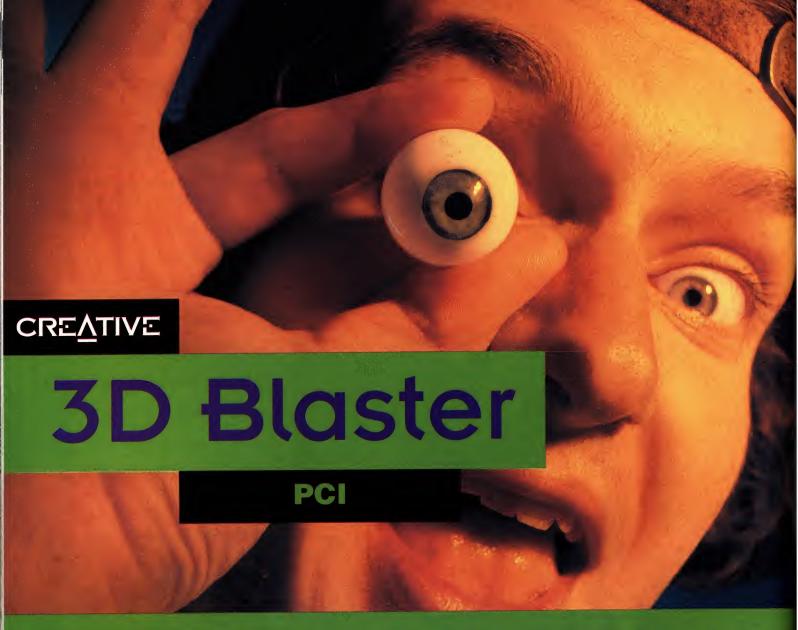
*Offer applies only when you order a Domino's Pizza.



FEED YOUR HEAD

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Creatures





If there's anybody on the PC
Zone team who desperately, desperately needs a life, it's Charlie Brooker. Hopefully, Creatures will let him breed one of his very own...

REALLY WISH I DIDN'T HAVE TO WRITE this, you know. Not because it's quite late at night and I really ought to be in bed (although that is true), not because I don't really know where to begin (although that's true as well), but because June's absolutely

starving to death and try as I might, I just can't convince her that eating a carrot would be a good idea. One more anguished look from her and I might burst into tears. I wish she'd pay attention to what her little brother Hud is doing - he's eating more or less everything, the greedy little lardarse but she seems more interested in the complexities of submarine navigation than the basic concept of eating to stay alive. Meanwhile, Sassy (her mother) has developed an unpleasant cough, and since she's getting on a bit I fear it may spell the end for her. Not that her 'husband' Tim gives a toss - he's too

> (Left) One of my weedier offspring, Sid, running away from Foxy, the local temptress. Pull yourself together, man.

(Below right) You're only given six eggs to play with, so use 'em wisely.

busy cavorting with new girl Mandy on a secluded desert island somewhere. The filthy little bugger.

What the hell am I on about? Creatures, that's what. Didn't you read the headline, knucklehead?

It's life, Jim...

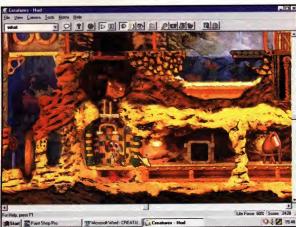
Creatures, billed as the world's first commercial "artificial life experiment", has caused something of a stir among boffins, computer programmers, and the sort of polo-neck wearing Nigels who write 'cyberlife' columns in broadsheet newspapers. Even Douglas Adams (erstwhile Hitchhikers' Guide bloke, and a bit of a computer nerd on the sly) has been quoted as saying that











Creatures is more exciting than the recent discovery of life on Mars. Since he's not the type to be taken in by empty hyperbole, it's clear that something rather special is going down here.

And indeed it is. My initial reaction upon reading the basic idea behind the 'game' (if you can call it that) was cynical to say the least. Raise and nurture a race of authentic digital animals? Teach them tricks? Teach them to speak? Breed offspring? Two words immediately sprang to mind: 'Sea Monkeys'.

Remember Sea Monkeys? They used to advertise them in kid's comics, years back. Usually a little ad on the "Desperate Dan Pie-Eater's Club" page, if my memory serves me well. Beneath a large drawing of some alarmingly human-like 'Sea Monkeys' sat a list of quite flabbergasting claims. Sea Monkeys, it said, were intelligent, complex creatures that lived underwater. You hatched them from little shells (which would be sent through the post) and then sat back and watched as they swam, frolicked, formed co-operative street theatre companies, built their own Harrier jets, and generally set about laying the foundation for an aquatic utopian civilisation which would thrive for centuries in your bedroom fishtank. It was bollocks, of course: I never actually saw any myself, but I have it on good authority that they were little more than lumps of some lichen-type

(Top left) You can teach the Norns some basic concepts with this handy 'learning machine'. The rest is up to you.

(Above left) Hud, seemingly unimpressed by the shower unit.

(Top right) Awww, just look at them. Pwetty wickle norny-wornies.







substance, shoved in a shell – and were more likely to be found poisoning your goldfish than bravely leading mankind into the Age of Aquarius.

Thankfully, *Creatures* doesn't appear to be a con. And if it *is* a con, it's a bloody entertaining one. I could crack on for ages about the difference between 'Artificial Intelligence', and 'Artificial Life' (which is what you get here), but really, all you need to know is this: these things are *fascinating*. And very, very *live*.

All you need is love

You're provided with six eggs at the start. Your task is simply to breed as many natural offspring as you can. Everything else is up to you; after all, they're your kids. It's a good idea to teach them a few basic concepts to start off with (such as eating - which is where I failed with the aforementioned 'June'), and once you've mastered that they'll be more receptive to performing more complicated tasks (the on-screen world they inhabit is crammed with stuff for them to tinker with), or expanding their vocabulary (if you're clever, you can even get them to tell you what they're thinking). You'll also need to keep an eye on their health (which can be examined in terrifying detail - right down to the minutiae of their biochemical make-up), their mental state (ditto), and their common sense (ie. making sure they're aware of the many dangers that await them). It's a never-ending task - probably the closest thing to a 'parenthood simulator' there's ever been. And, as with parenthood, what you get out of it is directly related to what you put in. Neglect your 'Norns' development and they'll be fairly unstable, stupid, and uninteresting. The moment you start genuinely caring for them, the satisfaction levels fly through the roof, and it becomes almost impossible to tear yourself away. I defy you not to feel a profound sense of loss when one of your 'favourites' (you can't help having 'favourites') bites the dust.

And if you don't start doting on the newborn babies (which inherit some of their parent's characteristics, good or bad) like an over-protective, dewy-eyed mother, then I suggest you take a look at yourself and ask "why am I such a callous, loveless shell of a person?" Longevity is guaranteed once you perfect the breeding process: you'll be determined to make each generation 'better' than the last - and that's a never-ending challenge. I haven't even mentioned the Internet aspect yet (you can 'trade' creatures with other prospective breeders, or download new 'plug-ins' from the CyberLife site), but you can rest assured that this is about to explode.



Parental advisory: explicit cuteness

As you can see, the 'Norns' are also stomach-churningly cute. Don't let that put you off. *Creatures* is the

most enchanting program
I've seen in years. I'll
repeat my earlier point how much you get out
of it is up to you. Do
bear this in mind when
you look at the rating I've
given it, which reflects
my gut reaction. I'm not the
soppy type (I rooted for *Scar* in *The Lion King*), yet I think I'm
in love with my 'Norns'.

Which is more than I can say for most people. Scary? Slightly.
Spellbinding? Completely. Z



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb RAM

Processor: 486DX266 (Pentium recommended)

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Keyboard

Score



Price: £29.99 Release Date: November Publisher: Warner Interactive Tel: 0171 391 4300

E-mail: http://www.cyberlife.co.uk

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NAVIGATION OVERLAYS

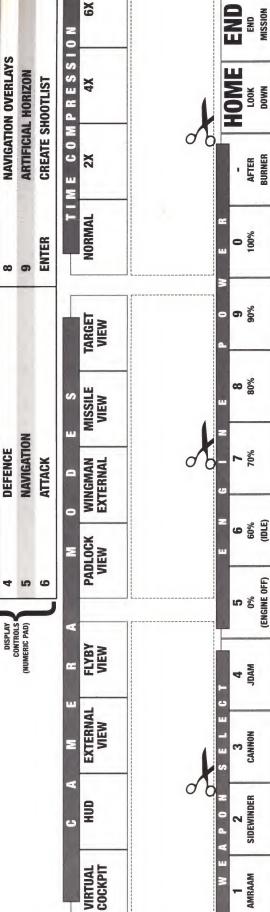
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DEFENCE

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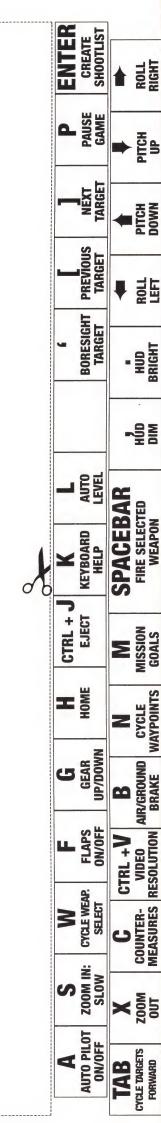
STORES

HUD REPEATER



EXIT

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L_Hockev.9

For the fourth year running, EA have produced a version of the same ice hockey game. So Patrick "Puck Face" McCarthy has produced a version of the same ice hockey game review.

CE HOCKEY IS COOL. IT'S THE ONLY sport where it helps to have a flat nose. In every other sport, people run about with expensive Band-Aids stretched across their schnozzes to hold their nostrils open really wide. In ice hockey, if they used them at all, it'd be to get their noses completely flush with their cheekbones: ice hockey players laugh in the face of anyone with a nose that isn't counter-sunk, or who has more than two teeth.

The game's getting more and more popular in this country. England even has a team in the inaugural European Champions League-type thing (admittedly they're getting stuffed by all the Scandos, but at least they're there). And the reason it's so popular is because it's so action-packed. Players get pucks in the mouth, hawk great gobbets of blood and shattered incisors without a thought, rake each other's spleens with sticks, smash each other into the boards and leave enormous tooth-gouges up the ice. A commentator on





(Left) Yup, you can customise your stats board into won, lost, testicles remaining and points.

(Above) "Okay, fella, where d'ya wannit?" "In the nads, oh please, in the nads."

(Right) Luckily for your side, this guy's name isn't Gareth Southgate.

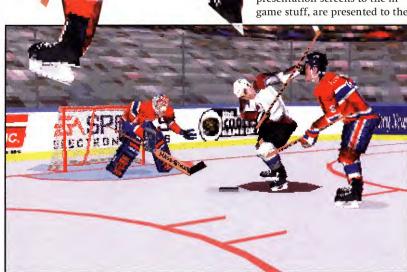


parts suppliers, who burp, howl, stomp, scream, break wind and eat hotdogs with their mouths open. None of this happens quietly.

The art of noise

EA's series of games have always managed to capture a very good approximation of all this. There's everything from the sounds of stick on puck and bone, to authentically tinny organ music (with the crowd joining in) that's like something from The Carnival of Souls. There are grunts of pain when you floor an opponent and satisfying smacking noises when the puck hits them in the tads. A digitised announcer, complete with slight echo, calls the penalties out and recounts the goals and assists, and there's also a play-by-play commentary.

The graphics, from the presentation screens to the ingame stuff, are presented to the



Control yourself

Again, the controls utilise all those multiple button presses, without which EA seem to think we'd pine away to nothing and die, and which they like to force onto what you'd think would be the simplest of sports. If you have the necessary hand/joypad dexterity, there are fake shots to make the computercontrolled goalie fall over in amazement; drop passes, one-twos and first-time shots; and the extremely useful option to make your defenders 'hit the ice' - in other words, throw themselves lengthwise to try to cover as much area as possible to block a shot. This isn't as insane as it sounds, given the amount of padding these people wear - it's just a question of finding the puck afterwards. (Usually it's in their mouth, where their teeth used to be.)



high standards we've come to expect from EA Sports stuff, and the quality of in-game animation is as good as ever. Players lean into a heavy challenge, poke out their sticks to trip, or raise them across their bodies to crosscheck opponents, who sprawl on the ice, arms and legs akimbo. They even sit up before rejoining the fray. It's all played at a fast and smooth pace, too - if you have a decent machine. But then, all this was true of last year's offering. And the one before.

play one-off exhibition games or a full season with every NHL team, or two all-star divisional teams. And the players and their telephone directory's-worth of statistics are all as up-to-date as possible. If you think a blue line is something to do with Jack Warner and a face-off has

something to do with cosmetic surgery, you won't give a toss about all this, you'll just want to know what you get from this version that you didn't from last year's.

This year's model

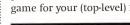
In keeping with EA's policy of always giving you a little something extra each time to keep you buying, this year there are national teams. Well, a few, anyway. Tucked among the club sides you'll find Team Canada, Team Russia, Team usa, Team Europe and... Team Scandinavia. This seems to

imply that no Scandinavian country has a team worth mentioning in its own right, whereas in fact both Sweden and Finland have been World Champions in recent years (beating the USA in the process). You might think this patronising, and an indication of cultural imperialism. Or you might not.

The other Big New Thing, and the thing we're all supposed to be getting excited about, is... the referee close-ups. When play stops, the camera angle changes to a zoomed-in view of one of the officials, who picks up the puck, skates stylishly through the players and places it where the next face-off will be. To be fair, it is extremely well done, well-animated, and the first couple of times you see it you'll think, "Cool." But that's all. After that you'll want to switch it off and get on with the game.

Which leaves you with the fact that the game is basically the same all over again. Yes, it's a great game. It plays beautifully. It's easy to get into, and you'll soon be stringing passes together and raining shots down on the goal (if not actually scoring). Players react with intelligence when you're not controlling

them (which makes it something of a shame when you get your hands on them, really). And once again, it's probably the best-realised sports game on the PC. But do we have to have one every year, regardless? Basically, despite the ref animations, a few graphical tweaks and a smattering of national squads, it's a data disk for those who simply must have this year's stats. If you have an earlier version and aren't an ice hockey nut, it's not an essential purchase. If you don't, and want a great game for your (top-level) PC, this is it. Z



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb RAM (16Mb recommended)

Processor: Pentium

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster & compatibles

Controls: Keyboard, Mouse, Joystick, Gamepad

Score



See you next year. Same time, same place. And probably same score.

Price: £44.95 Release Date: Out Now Publisher: Electronic Arts Tel: 01753 549442



The People's Choice

As usual, you can (Above) We asked our

Big tartan rug alert

pack crowd arrangements, but this one wins this year's Oscar for

EA's Virtual Stadium series has become a byword for flat-

Art Editor if there was a font that would convey a high-pitched scream indicative of extreme genital distress, he said "bollocks", which we didn't think was a font.

Least Realistic Representation Of A Group Of Observers. What you get is a load of multi-coloured squares that basically look like someone's just thrown a really big tartan rug over all the seats. It's like playing ice hockey in the back of an Austin Cambridge.



"A perfect combination of destruction, filthy cunning and devilish humour make this one of the best 2 player games ever made."

C&VG 5 OUT OF 5

"One of the freshest, downright immediate combat games ever to send shrapnel across a computer screen."

PC Review





utque GAME















THERE IS A CREATURE

Admit it. He's in there. In some dark corner of your brain. Let him loose in Leisure Suit Larry's ® latest, greatest

INSIDE EVERY MAN THAT WANTS TO

CD-ROM adventure: "Love for Sail!" Al Lowe is at his bawdy best, launching software's best-known character

GROPE, FONDLE AND SAY

loose on a cruise ship filled with buxom beauties. The result? Laughs by the boatload. Groan at Lowe-ly puns.

INAPPROPRIATE

Snort along with Scratch 'n' Sniff puzzles.

THINGS TO WOMEN.

Stare at the best babes this side of a plastic surgeon's office. Stick your

HIS NAME IS LARRY.

face in the game (and your voice, too). All the fun of picking up women without that bracing slap in the face.





COMING... END NOVEMBER FOR PC CD-ROM



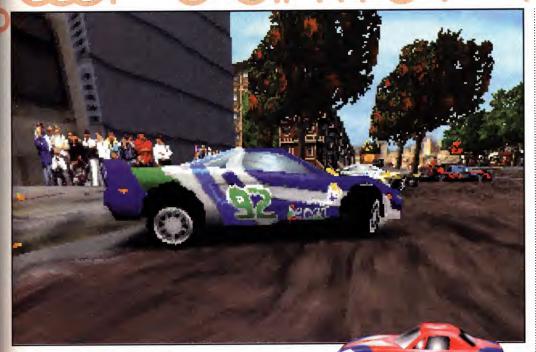
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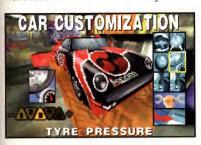
Screamer 2





Want a review of a brilliant arcade game? You've got it!
And at the same time Duncan MacDonald will teach you how to speak Spanish.
Kinder egg or what?

MMM, ANOTHER CAR GAME. I suppose I'd better start with a driving anecdote. Okay then, true story: I was on a driving holiday with a chum in the States and we decided to head into Mexico for a couple of days. We filled up with 'gas' at the border and headed south on a road - useful for linking purposes, this which looked not unlike the Egyptian stage on Screamer 2. Anyway, hours passed, and the needle on the petrol gauge was beginning to alarm me: I wasn't sure we'd make it to Nogales, the town we were heading for. Then we spotted a side road (more of a dirt track, actually), and there was a sign next to it which read "Peligro". Thank God for that. We'd go there and fill up. "Do you think they'll have a petrol station?" wondered Steve. We decided they



probably would, and started towards the place. The dirt track got narrower, dirtier, and bumpier by the minute. Then it rose alarmingly, into the mountains. A quarter of an hour later we were perched precariously on the edge of a cliff, so I had to reverse all the way back down again (which was pretty hairy, believe me). Anyhow, we did eventually make it to Nogales, and, once there, bought a map - on which there was no mention of Peligro. On return to Blighty I was told by a Spanish-speaking chum that Peligro means 'Danger'...

Peligro...

Naff link alert: the tracks on *Screamer 2* should have Peligro signs plastered on nearly every corner – it's that sort of game. Whereas the original was paying lip service to *Ridge Racer, Screamer 2* is pretty much in the realms of *Sega Rally*. And it's here that the first question has to be broached. I've got to 'get it out of the way' as it were...



Question: "Sega Rally is pretty hot, is Screamer 2 as good?"

Answer: "No, it's actually a tad better because it's got far more longevity!"

Blimeyo...

I'm guessing here, but I'd reckon that the *Screamer 2* crew have deconstructed *Sega Rally* to the nth degree. They've obviously played it to death and have asked themselves what works, what doesn't work, what gets boring first, and so on. Then they've added their own bits to the overall equation.

The result is a blinder. The only criticism I have, and I may as well mention it now, is that the cars handle pretty 'iffily' – but if I whinged about this at length I know that Johnny Tightarse will say "Yes, but it's an arcade game, it doesn't matter." Okay then, it's an arcade game and it doesn't matter – alright? Next...

Los Presentationo...

Everything about the arcadey front end says "Play me, play me", to the point where you don't quite know what to do first, options-wise. I'll take them one by one...

ARCADE: Or, if

you prefer,

'instant

Look
at all these
screenshots and shake
the page really quickly
in front of your eyes.
Well done, you now
know how quickly the

game runs. Soopah!





In Perspective

Screamer 2's more 'fun' than Network Q, but maybe hasn't the longevity. Graphically it pisses on Need For Speed, but ain't as 'real'.

Network Q RAC Rally

Screamer 2

Need For Speed

Screamer

gratification'. Select this and you're offered three tracks, a choice of four cars, and then you get to race the three computer-controlled cars over one, three, five or ten laps.

CHAMPIONSHIP: There are four legs. Finish the first three tracks in overall first position (10 points for a win, six for second place etc) and you'll be allowed

to progress to leg two, which has an 'added' track, but harder opposition.

Come overall first in this leg and it's onto the third, which has yet another new track (and yet harder opposition). Finish this final leg in the required overall first place, and you now have an arcade racing game with six different tracks. But wait! You know how console racing games tend to include hidden 'secrets'? Well, so does *Screamer 2*.

There's a seventh track tucked away in its brain – and a 'secret' car. There may be other joys to discover, but I haven't yet managed to get past the second leg.

TIME ATTACK: This is, basically, a practice mode, Choose a track (the more

The computer controlled cars are nicely Al'd... in other words they'll block you and smash you (above) and are also quite capable of crashing all on their own.

TIME ATTACK: This is, basically, a practice mode. Choose a track (the more you've accessed in Championship mode the more you can access here) and burn rubber. You against the clock. But then that's not mentioning the 'ghost car', which is, essentially, you! Yup, the computer remembers your best lap, so you can race yourself. (This also works nicely as a two-player game, and it's great for gambling.)

MULTI-PLAYER: A large groan arises from the vast majority here... after all, how many people are blessed with four-player networking facilities? Still, haul kit to a chum's and you can go head-to-head through a serial lead. Or there's a split-screen mode, and it works a treat – although the usual 'who's going to use the joypad' arguments will ensue.

Los Trackios...

I haven't a clue what the secret track is like - but as for the six available ones, I've managed (through being rather skill) to access five. They are (from easiest onwards) England, Egypt, California, Finland and Switzerland. The sixth (I know from the manual) is Columbia. I won't go fawny ga-ga here, but the graphics are superb: I could talk about each track in anally intense detail for a year: about how trains go over



bridges above you; about how animated cows go 'moo' as you drive past; about the necessity of precise

timing and powerslides, and on and on and on. Let's just say there's trackside detail akimbo. (It's worth mentioning that there are no checkpoints, though, so you can drive back and check the scenery should you be of a mind.) (Oh, and it's also worth mentioning that the tracks are subjected to different weather conditions as the difficulty levels increase.)

Los conclusionos and el boastio...

I've got an A4 sheet of paper in front of me on which I scribbled hundreds of little 'notes' while playing the game. But they're mostly bollocks, to be honest, so I'll end by simply stating that Screamer 2 is the dog's sausage. There's room for improvement, yes, but then the same could be said of everything. Oh, and as I should imagine you'll be buying this game, how about I lay down a little challenge... and bear in mind that the following lap times were achieved after only a few hours.

England – best lap 1:13:50, using the Radiance.

Egypt – best lap 1:27:20, using the Nebula.

Finland – best lap 1:43:42, using the Nebula.

So... feel lucky, punkios? Z

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb (16Mb for hi-res)

Processor: P60

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Keyboard, joystick, gamepad & T2 wheel

Score



Los arcadio racios superbo! Muchos drivio! Peligro, peligro!

Price: £39.95 Release Date: Out now Publisher: Virgin Tel: 0171 368 2255



Los Motorvehiclios...

There are four cars on offer, and to my mind only one worth using. Still, if you use the car setup option (tyre pressures, suspension etc) more successfully than I did, you may well find yourself disagreeing completely...

FADIANCE: it's the fastest, but the rear end pokes out so readily it's like there are ice-cubes stapled to the tyres.

SPARK: it's front-wheel drive, and it looks a bit like a Toyota Starlet, so maybe it's especially for girls.

HORIZON: "One for the novice driver," it says in the manual. Er, so you don't want be seen using that, then.

NEBULA: four-wheel drive, no airbags, and it weighs nine squillion tonnes. Wahay! That's the one!





FANCY TRYING ONE OF YOUR SPECIAL MOVES ON ME?





Ultimate So Manager 2



There was another hilarious mix-up in the office when we gave this game to Patrick McCarthy. Unfortunately, we can't remember what it involved.

NTIL NOW, YOU'VE BASICALLY HAD the choice between one of two football management games – Championship Manager 2, the Holy of Holies and most addictive thing a football fan will ever get their hands



on; and *Premier Manager 3*, which despite its name, makes you start life in the Vauxhall Conference and has Amiga graphics and dozens of faults. *USM2* is a worthy addition to their ranks. At first I didn't like it – in a direct comparison with *CM2*, it comes up short in several areas – but once you stop treating it like a serious football management game it has a few things to offer.

You can play an English, French or German league game but you can't actually view a foreign team, which seems a bit of a waste of whatever effort has gone into compiling them. The parochial approach extends to the ingame conversations you have with your staff – it's a little unsettling to have a chat with a German Chairman who speaks in a comedy Yorkshire accent, or a French assistant manager who talks like Ringo Starr.

Cheaty McCheat

When you first start the game you can decide whether you want to play it straight, or get into match-rigging,

One of the better features is the fact that you can design and use your own special set moves, whether from corners and other set-pieces, or during the game itself. You can also move players about within formations according to where the ball is on the pitch, like a more refined version of the system used in *Sensible Soccer*.

Movers and Shakers



(Left) Look at that really bad midfield grouping. Even the ref can't believe his eyes.

j(Above) So I said, "Lager Louts? Is that like Hamilton Academicals? Buy 'em" bribery, corruption and bungs; it's also the moment to take advantage of the Music Off option and start the game with 10 million quid (even if you're Gillingham, or Brighton). You can edit your team, changing ratings or even creating new players. There's nothing to stop you making up your own Ronaldo, or Stefan Reuter, or whoever you think you'd like, but won't be able to get.

Or will you?

In fact, you'd be surprised just who does come up for transfer (See *Transfers* boxout). The transfer market and the ratings system leave a lot to be desired in the reality stakes. And at first, it's the game's faults that you notice, rather than good points. For example, you have to hire coaches to improve the team's skills, but you don't always start the game with one. And if there isn't a general coach available in the list of two or three people you get at the start, you're stuck without one. You're certainly not going to waste money hiring a specialist 'throwing' coach.

briefing, the chairman draws a map of his office.

(Left) At the team pre-

(Below) A back four. I

Niggles

When offering a price for someone on the transfer market, it's really annoying



In Perspective

Good enough, if you like all that extra work, but it doesn't soar into the boundless empyrean like some.

Championship Manager 2

USM 2

Premier Manager 3

that you can only move the price in increments of one pound. No lower league players have decent ratings (if they're in a lower league side, they're not as good and that's that) – so there's no chance of picking up a Danny Murphy type.

And the scouts are a bit crap. My 'superb' Gillingham scout recommended Alessandro del Piero and Ricardo Sa Pinto as strikers. Yeah, right – they're going to leave Juventus and Sporting for Gillingham, aren't they?



(Left) God, it's really late, do I have to think of a caption for this boring screenshot? Can't we make it a readers' competition or something? I mean, this is the Christmas

(Below) Oh, this is better, like Monopoly, innit. I'll buy three stands and a hotel in Highbury.

issue, isn't it?



(Below right) Ferk me, look at all that. I can remember when we were so poor we kicked a pig's bladder about in the street when the pig was still alive...



And yet...

Despite these minor niggles, though, you gradually start to appreciate the fact that it's trying so hard. Basically, the game goes for everything full-on. On the financial side, you'll be looking after everything from the advertising hoardings to the price of the beer in the club restaurants and bars, setting ticket prices for different areas of the ground and different matches, and even taking charge of ground development. (If you're not interested in any of this, you can switch it all off at the start, or get your assistants to deal with certain elements.) And on the team side you'll be doing everything from offering star players incentives to join the club, to creating your own moves and set-piece plays and arranging individual training for players.

Overall, it has more in common with PM3 than CM2. Just like PM, I find it hard to get obsessed with my team in this. This is in marked contrast to CM2, which is real life. It's a sad indictment of my own life, but the night I got Gillingham into the Premiership and won the Cup Winners' Cup with Spurs, I was jigging about, arms in the air, screaming "Yeee-eeee-eees!" (But silently, so I wouldn't wake my girlfriend.) I can't imagine ever caring that much



about a team in USM2. Anyone who liked Premier Manager, though, will like this more, simply because it has everything PM3 has, only more so, and you don't have that tedious crap about starting with a non-league side. **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486/33

Graphics: VGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse

Score



Worth a look if you like the PM3 style – but not as good as CM2.

Price: £39.95 Release Date: Out now Publisher: Sierra Tel: 01734 303322



The Big Match

During the match itself, you'll see the players running about on the pitch. You can view the proceedings at normal speed, at 2-, 4- or 8-times normal speed, or see the result instantly. You can Replay any incidents, and change tactics and team through the Subs option. Once play stops (if it ever does) you can change formation, tactics and playing style (although this only consists of a choice between long ball and passing), and you can also decide how strongly your team will go into a tackle (a scale of three, ranging from a Le Tissier-type airy wave of the foot, up to a Neil Ruddock-style all-out assault). And you can give players instructions on an individual basis, without having to pull embarrassing faces and shout nonsense.

TRANSFERS

Although there is an on-going transfer market, it doesn't really have the ring of authenticity about it. I got Robbie Fowler for 2.3m on the first day. In one game, Alan Shearer was up for grabs. Southampton bought Jürgen Klinsmann and Gianluca Vialli. I got Roberto di Matteo on loan for three months and bought Matthias Sammer for 1.9 million. You could argue, of course, that given that you can make players up at the start of the game, none of this matters much.

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> > Speech by Kimb Lake: Day one of TetraCorp assimilation training: 20:08:2340

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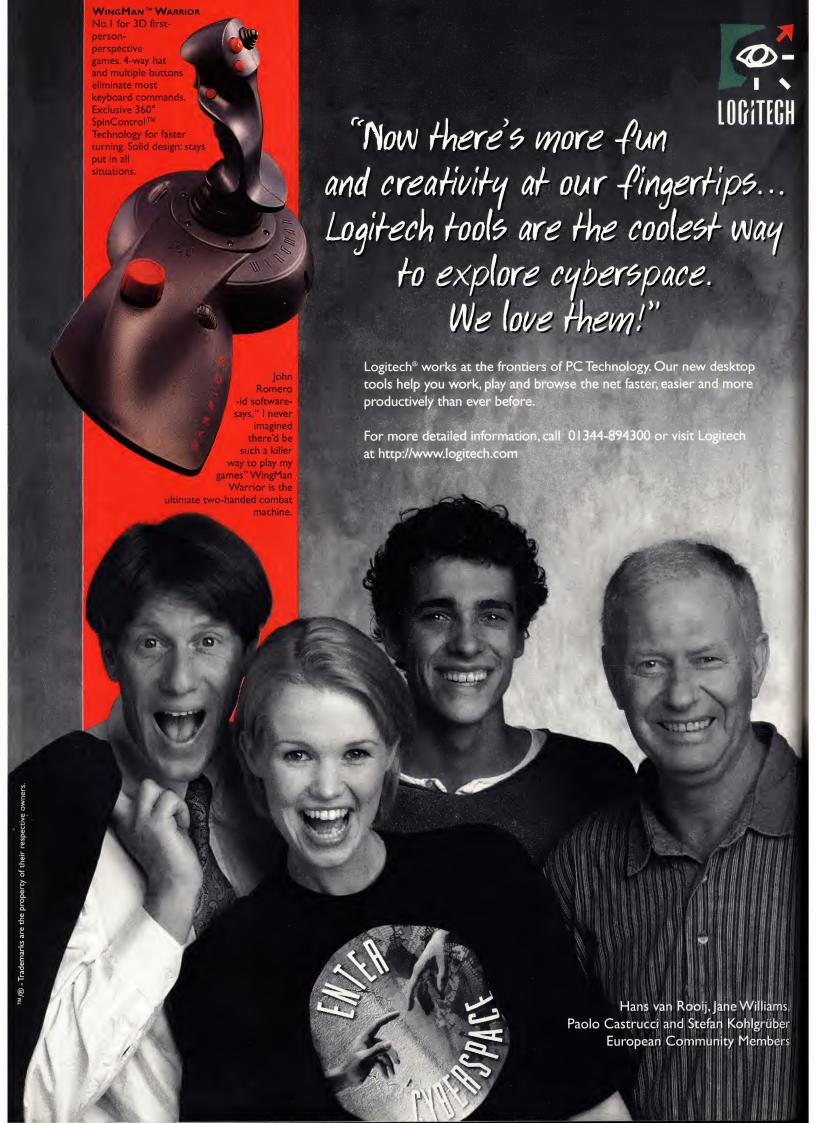
DEEP SPACE INTENSE STRATEGY











War Wind



Anyone fancy a Warcraft clone, we said? Andrew Wright reckons he's been there, done it, worn out the t-shirt and slept through the film. So we gave him War Wind.

Extract from top secret telephone intercept

Transmission method: Scrambled microwave

Voice at Mindscape (designated voice 1): "Look there's this game called Warcraft 2 that has these little fantasy world creatures running around







building things and killing each other. Apparently, the mugs, er, I mean punters, are falling over themselves to buy it. Have we got anything like it?"

Voice believed member of swi development team (designated voice 2): "Not that bloody fantasy shite again. Look, we've done Dark Sun, Dark Legions and Fantasy General. Give us a break. Call ip or someone."

Voice 1: "There's dollars in it."

Voice 2: "You're on. What shall we call it?"

Voice 1: "I thought War something or other."

Voice 2: "War Pigs? War Blobs? Warcraft Revisited?"

Voice 1: "Great! Make it Warcraft 3 for Windows 95 and we'll all get a big fat bung from Gates. Some pillocks are bound to try and upgrade just so they can play it."

Voice 2: "Usual fantasy creatures? Elves, orcs and goblins?"

Voice 1: "No, I was thinking of something rather more subtle. Like fat, three-legged, red-skinned hippos, squirmy little green plantylike things, half-naked pink blobs with three eyes and perhaps purple snakes."

Voice 2: "Subtle one, boss. Okay, we'll codename it War Wind for short. So what do you want in it?"

Voice 1: "Well, lots more unit types and vehicles. Oh and lots of spells. People like spells. And colourful buildings – not that depressing crap

that was in Command & Conquer.



(Above) An Obblinox Colossus attacks the Tha Roon. And I want stealth bombers and tactical nuclear weapons..."

Voice 2: "Uh, 'scuse me boss but fat, three-legged, red-skinned hippos are one thing, but giving them stealth bombers and nukes is another."

Voice 1: "Well, okay, but this is the bottom line. When I give it to some dumbass hack on PC Zone, I want the first thing to spring to his pathetic, unimaginative little mind to be... Warcraft with knobs on. How's that?"

Voice 2: "Cool, boss." Line disconnect.



All right, so we've got Warcraft with knobs on. You've seen it all before. The scenery is a dead ringer for the



Warcraft stuff, the fog of war works in the same way and even the trees look the same. On the other hand, the creatures are a little different. And there are loads more units and all kinds of little, well, extras.

There are differences too. For a start you have to hire units rather than create them from scratch and occasionally you don't get the ones you need. However, you can retrain advanced units of one type so that they become another type, which certainly adds to the strategic side of the game.

You can choose from four races in single and multi-player modes. Top of the tree are the strong, technologically advanced Tha Roon, but they're expensive and you don't get many of them to the pound. Special units include Assassins, Jump Troops (limited range airborne) and Psionics. Next come the Obblinox, hard-fighting, tough thugs that are slow and stupid. Their special units are Agents, Bikers and the tank-like Colossus.

From here on in it just gets weirder. The Eaggra are plant-like things that are good at building and strong in numbers. They can build Druids and Grenadiers, a kind of long-range artillery. Last come the Shama Li, a race of Mystic Meg lookalikes with blobby bodies. They can become Shamans with healing spells or tough Elementals.

Each race needs different tactical handling if it's to get through the predetermined scenario path, but in multiplayer mode the differences become even more complex. If a Shama Li player allies with an Obblinox player, for example, it opens up all kinds of interesting strategies.

Combat and movement are fairly standard although the mouse does tend to jerk rather than scroll smoothly and sometimes it's not as responsive as it could be when selecting and deselecting units. ssi say this will be fixed by the time the game gets into the shops.

Units are chosen with the left mouse button, while the right button brings up a panel of icons denoting each of the possible actions, from fighting, moving and building, to taking, collecting and returning resources. Note the word taking – if you can get a couple of disguised or invisible units into your oppo's base, you can wreak economic havoc on a scale that even the Tories would be proud of.

Slow build-up

Building is slower, even if you set the game to maximum speed and in the early stages there's a lot of waiting to do. The good news is that the AI doesn't always hurl everything it builds straight at you. This means you can build up your forces and although there are also wandering monsters to fight off, you





(Above) The Eaggra are plants. We think.

(Top left) The map editor is nice and easy to use but won't let you after terrain.

(Bottom left) Shama Li
– see what I mean
about pink, blobby
things?

can plan a decent all-out battle without having to fight off incessant raids.

Another good point is the way line of sight works. In *War Wind* you can hide in trees and ambush opponents as some units don't see what's in a tree square until they're right next to it. Trees also slow down movement rather than barring it completely.

There's the usual game and scenario editor included, although it's disappointing to see that you can't actually alter terrain features on maps or create your own from scratch. You can only edit and tweak.

I've got to mention *Warcraft* one last time, of course. If you enjoyed it, you'll enjoy *War Wind*. It has much more in the way of a challenge for both single players and groups and it's got ten times the variety. Fix the jerky mouse movements and it will be a cracker. Over to you, ssi. **Z**

(Left) As usual you get loads of boring old video clips to fill up the space on the CD.

Tech specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: Pentium required

Graphics: 1Mb SVGA card

Sound: Windows compatible card needed

Controls: Mouse

Score



"Warcraft 2 with, er, a bit more."

Price: £44.99 Release Date: Out now Publisher: SSI/Mindscape Tel: 01444 246 333





WARCRAFT 2

Two different races with identical abilities

Healing only by spel

No transport by air

No transport by land

Defensive wal

Woods impassable Don't affect line of sight

Universal upgrades for all units of a type

Patrols in straight line only

Invisibility spell

Can't steal resources

MATE MINE

Four different races with varying abilities

Units can be healed in workshops

Air transport, attack and remote bombing

rucks hold four units

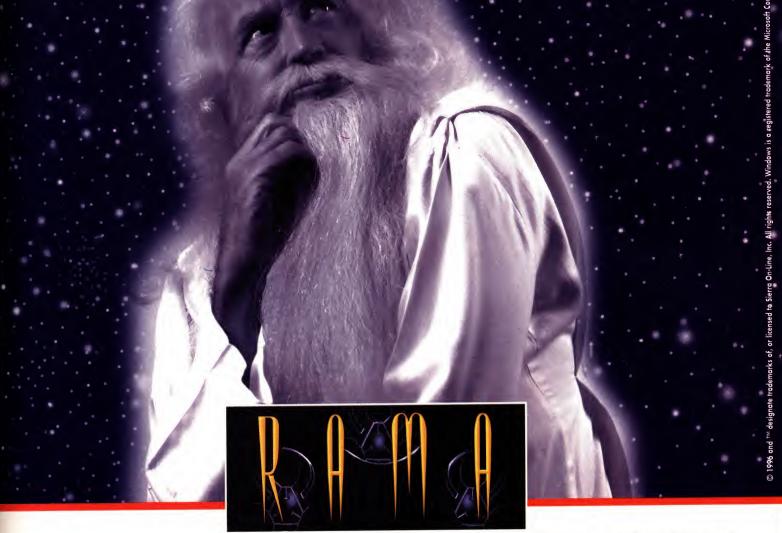
Defensive and offensive wall types plus bridges Woods slow movement and can conceal units

mulvidos dints can be given bio-apgrades

Different levels of stealth

Can etgal opponente recourage

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Until now, NovaLogic have produced the PC equivalents of Playmate of the Month - looking great but kinda vacant. Simon **Bradley** has just got his hands on Dana Scully...

-22 Lightning



OVALOGIC ARE RENOWNED FOR producing pretty but shallow games using groundbreaking graphics techniques and lots of action to make up for their deficiencies elsewhere. Well, that's about to change. Although Comanche vs Werewolf was actually a very good product, it hardly offered the last word in flight dynamics and integrity. And Voxelspace -

NovaLogic's acclaimed graphics engine - certainly looked marvellous, although it went all blocky and horrible close up, as well as being restricted in the angles you could tilt it. F-22 ups the ante somewhat. As well as being their first flight sim not to use Voxelspace technology, it's also their first to aim more at the propeller heads out there and less at the arcade players.

One for the boys

Let's get this straight. F-22 isn't about 200-page manuals, classified flight models and in-depth discussions of ACM and weapon parameters. Nor does it claim to be. What it is about is a reasonable flight model, with an aeroplane that behaves like one rather than like a spaceship, excellent graphics, good effects and a reasonable level of detail. In other words, this is a

(Left) "Ah, ripper, Bruce! It's Summer

(Right) The M11 was surprisingly quiet for a Bank Holiday.

(Bottom left)

Graphically, F-22 is the

decent Pentium, that is,

tops. If you've got a

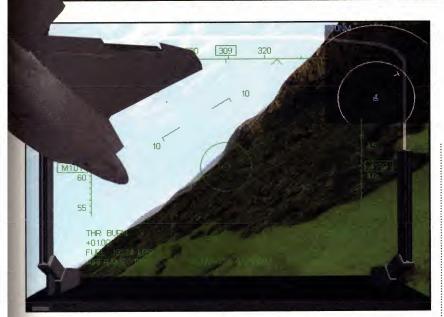


flight simulator which you can get into fairly easily and enjoy while avoiding that 'Sega' feeling which so often accompanies games like this. The missions, although not especially challenging at first, quickly build in

difficulty and although your weapons are more effective than they should be, there is still the opportunity for it all to go horribly wrong. When you do find yourself in a furball, despite the fact that the enemy pilots seem to have the IQ of a toaster, it can rapidly degenerate into a turning fight where you should be losing energy

Mission diary

0700 and the alarm goes. The resupply flight of C141s on the way in is being threatened by an unknown flight which is closing fast. You and your wingman are scrambled and vectored to intercept. You get off the deck in double guick time and pull a hard right turn onto the first waypoint. The AWAC's datafeed is already giving you information on the location of the bandits as they close on the transports. It's going to be tight... You select AMRAAMs and set up a shootlist. At 25 miles you flick on the radar and instruct your wingman to engage the first bandit. Then you target the others, rippling off one AMRAAM for each of the bandits. Thirty seconds later, it's all over. The stealthy approach and the LPI radar meant that the MiGs didn't have time to react and are now all riding the silk elevator. A brief thanks from the transports and it's back to refuel, rearm and get breakfast.



(Left) All aircraft detail is high quality and looks great even when close up.

faster than you can make it up. And then, of course, you'd be in trouble.

One of the biggest gripes I have is the way that your F-22 seems not to bleed energy when it should - I couldn't make it stall and in a knife fight simply opening the throttle seemed to be enough to get out of trouble. Now, earlier on I said that this wasn't about hi-fi flight models, and that is true, but it would be nice for physics to have a little more effect in places.

Looks good, sounds good

Make no mistake, though. When it comes to looks, this knocks pretty well every other fixed wing simulator currently available into a cocked hat. You'll believe that you're really there coastlines are beautiful, mountain forests are spectacular, deserts are, well, sandy. Other aircraft are superbly presented, and even ground targets manage to look good without suffering from that 'stuck on' look that afflicts many sims with high quality terrain graphics. F-22 is going to take some beating - and it doesn't go all pearshaped when you get up close either.

While we're on the subject of the overall effect, the sound is really quite excellent as well. You get full Dolby Surround sound and it really is worth it, although the music can get really irritating (you can turn it right down, but then you don't get any in the menu screens either). The background noise is

In Perspective

Arcadey flight simulations don't always work because they try to be two games in one. NovaLogic seem to have got it right.

F-22 **Top Gun**

Comanche

US Navy Fighters

good - just engine noise and the mechanical whirring you might expect (forget that you wouldn't really be able to hear them and accept that they're useful here), while the explosions from enemy flak are really quite unnerving.

So, what have you got? Well, overall you've got a very good-looking simulator which has a nice career progression, a neat mission builder and full network support - either co-operative or head-tohead. No multi-player campaigns, though. The flight model isn't exactly military spec, but it's better than many which claim to be ultra-realistic. I have to admit that I was honestly expecting to slag this off - I truly and passionately detested Comanche because I'm a helicopter pilot and I wanted better. This is really quite good, and will probably stay on my hard drive for quite a while. Z (Right) The terrain really is quite detailed. whilst ground targets don't appear to be 'stuck on'.

The Lockheed F22 is destined to be the Falcon of the late 90s. In other words, every man and his dog will be doing a simulator of it soon. In fact, even now we've got US Navy Fighters, ATF, this F-22 and the forthcoming release from I-Magic, and the darned thing has only just flown. However, it is a stoater of an aeroplane, and will probably be one of the few planes this century which will actually be as good as claimed. It's a middleweight attack fighter which costs more than its weight in gold, but is probably worth it. Hardly surprisingly, even the US will only have a few of these babies, but their speed, range and stealthiness will make up for that. The F-22 has been designed with the ability to 'Supercruise', which allows supersonic flight without using burners, making it both stealthy and fuel efficient. Couple this with vectored thrust to give a new level of agility and a powerful LPI radar and you've got a serious piece of kit. Just wish they'd let me fly one...



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb (16Mb recommended)

Processor: P90

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster, Adlib etc

Controls: Thrustmaster/CH control systems

Score



Beautiful and smart - what more could you ask?

Price: £TBA Release Date: Out now Publisher: NovaLogic Tel: 0171 607 9707



Jesus! I think this deserves a newsflash...

Simon Bradley gives arcade game 90%'. Shock horror. You know what I think? I think he was sucked in by the graphics - which are beautiful, admittedly. I love them myself. And I almost love the game, too, but for the fact that it's a bit repetitive. It's a tad simple, too. Once you've learnt how to use the radar, it's generally a case of taking off, following a couple of waypoints, launching four AMRAAMs, killing three BVR (beyond visual range) enemies, and then returning home for a very (very) easy landing. But now I'll get positive. F-22 isn't trying to be difficult. It's trying to do what Comanche did, or what Chuck Yeager's Air Combat did before that. In other words, it simply wants to be liked. And no problems there. If you're a relative newcomer to the flight sim genre, then this is a fantastic place to start. You don't even need to want to kill anything, just select an exterior viewpoint, crank up the revs and soar across the scenery, going 'wow'. Then rave about the brilliant ejection sequence. All you yawny prop heads, however, should think twice before applying. (Then again, Simon liked it... er, help, I'm confused).

Duncan MacDonald

Joysticks and Joypads R Saitek

Paul Presley reviews a shoot 'em up. (That's it? Couldn't you have made a joke about quasars or something? - Ed.) Are you kidding? Have you seen our average reader? You're lucky I spelt Paul correctly.

Gaptain Quasa



S SALES OF THE 3DO CONSOLE continue to dive quicker than a German striker in the penalty box, so The 3DO Company look to new horizons. Hence Captain Quasar, a conversion of the popular (among those who like it) shoot 'em up appears on our monitors.

The story's the usual kind of thing mega-powerful villains are intent on taking over the entire galaxy and rather than send out the space-based version of a swar team, the powers that be decide to send just one man to stop them, Captain Quasar, lantern-jawed hero of many an adventure. So nothing new there, then.

It's a classic. Not

And the game's pretty much the same. Remember those classic arcade games of yore (ie. 1992)? The ones where you (and sometimes a partner) wander around a top-down, vaguely isometric playing area, armed with stupidly large guns, blowing away everything in sight? Fun at 50p a time but not something you'd want to spend upwards of 30 quid on. Well, it's that sort of thing here, too. You're sent into one of a series of 'worlds' with a couple of objectives which are almost always 'Blow up x number of things' - and from there on in your finger's rarely off the fire buttons.





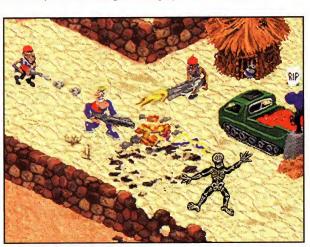
Only trouble is there's very little challenge, and what's there is for the wrong reasons. For one thing, it's stupidly difficult. Now, I know arcade games like this aren't supposed to be completed in a few hours, but when you shoot a bad guy you'd expect him to die wouldn't you? Well, apparently Captain Quasar's programmers think differently. It takes about 20 shots to kill just one opponent in some places, and when you consider that you start with an ammo clip of only 50 and the bad guys are all randomly generated and just keep coming no matter what, it doesn't take long before you're out of ammo and out of luck.

Most games in this genre usually provide the player with one basic gun that has unlimited ammo (the explanation usually being that it's an energy weapon and runs off ever-lasting batteries). This at least gives the player a

(Above) The graphics are nothing special, but then this is a 3D0 port.

(Bottom left) Power-ups in an arcade game? Whatever next?

(Below) The screenshots belie the repetitive nature of the gameplay.



fighting chance until he can get his hands on a power-up.

Nothing good about it?

Let me tell you about the 'flip side' to Captain Quasar. The intro sequence and subsequent cut-scenes. They're brilliant. Absolutely fantastic. I don't think I've seen a funnier title sequence since Z's head-banging robots. And this continues throughout. Every animation is a joy to behold and funnier than a lot of 'proper' cartoons. The Captain's heroic laugh, his Popeye-style mumbling, the rapping droids (funnier than it sounds). It's just such a shame that the actual game so spectacularly fails to live up to its presentation.

Of course, coming directly from the 3DO you'd expect this sort of thing. That console's strength was in its ability to play FMV and most of its games utilised this aspect to the full. Even so, quality comedy is a rare enough thing in any game these days and I just wish it hadn't been wasted on this particular

iech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486/DX2

Graphics: VGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Keyboard, joystick

Score

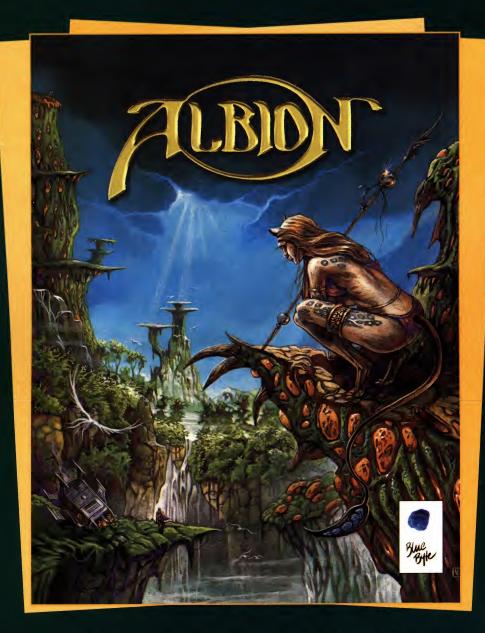


A superb intro sadly let down by the actual game.

Price: £39.95 Release Date: Out now Publisher: The 3D0 Company



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Krazy Ivan

At least once in everyone's ife they're going to come across an FMV character they fancy to the point where they want to start stalking'. Duncan MacDonald's just popped out to buy a gun and a camouflaged anorak...

REMEMBER FIRST BEING PLUNGED into stalking frenzy by the female lead from a shite 3DO kung-fu doofer. The name of the game escapes me, but she was called Vivien Nu. She told me - in the game - that I was her only hope of recovering the nagic sword, and she even helped me out in a couple of my fights. It was lestiny. But then she suddenly dissed me, simply because I couldn't get past Akiudu, the Ninja Lord. I thought she was only joking, but she wasn't. Bitch!!! tracked her down to an address in New Mexico, which was a bummer, because I'm afraid of flying, and of ships. Still, we live in an electronic age, eh. Eventually, she changed her telephone number, casting me adrift on an ocean

But wait. A lifeboat has come along. The FMV introduction sequence for *Krazy Ivan* is brief, to the point, nicely directed, and very amusing. But more than that, it has a chick in it, and as our eyes met for the first time it was as if somebody had let off a Catherine Wheel inside my small intestine. Hoping against hope that my new-found love would appear in the game itself, I scrambled for the 'play' icon...

Swoon...

There she was – in the left-hand corner of the screen – a picture within a picture. My darling! My blood! My bones! My life! She told me (in a Russian accent) that I had to kill things. I told

bones! My life! She told me (in a Russian accent) that I had to kill things. I told her that I adored her.
We shared a momentary glance, then her



image began to fade. She was gone. And then the attacks started.

Bastards...

To see my love again I'd have to shoot like I'd never shot before. No problem; I felt I was 'hard enough'. But wait – I was getting cacked on bigtime by the enemy. The reason for this was that my in-game character was impossible to control. Why should this be, I wondered? Then I thought, 'Quake'. Yes, of course, I would redefine the controls so that I had both mouse and keys as my allies. Uh? What was this? Oh no!!!

A narrator intervenes...

Duncan was in a right old fix. *Krazy Ivan* has a customisable control menu, but the mouse is not selectable - meaning that his trusty 'Quake' setup was not available. He tried numerous key combinations, but found his fingers getting tangled up. He eventually plumped for joystick and keys, but even this wasn't acceptable. And anyway, he found *Krazy Ivan* unbelievably sluggish in responding to command inputs: a 180-degree turn seemed to take an age, as did just about anything else. The

(Above) 'Monster behind, monster behind!' someone cries. Unfortunately, it takes so long to turn round that by the time you see him he's virtually standing on your head.
(Right) A map.

My one true love!! Sara!





graphics weren't a great help either, with severely restricted forward vision inducing 'fogged pop-up'. He was getting hammered due to no fault of his own, and was becoming dangerously frustrated. He knew that this game had been raved over by the PlayStation press, but found himself unable to understand why. What would have been a perfectly enjoyable blast 'em up was being hampered by lack of the two things it most needed: speedy response and a distant horizon. He realised he'd never progress far enough to enjoy more of the fab FMV. Back to Duncan...

I give up...

I gave up, annoyed. Denied further sight of my love in-game, I decided to go for the next best thing. Reaching for my pile of telephone directories, I turned to the 'S' pages. Stockbridge couldn't be a particularly common surname, I felt, and hopefully she'd be listed with her full christian name of Sara, rather than just an initial. (Let's hope for her sake she's ex-directory – Ed.) **Z**



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: Pentium

Graphics: 1Mb Vesa compatible

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Keyboard, joystick

Score



Deep within, no doubt, lies a very playable shooty game, but the control system stopped me from finding it.

Price: £39.99 Release Date: Out now Publisher: Psygnosis Tel: 0151 282 3000



Trips Worth taking.





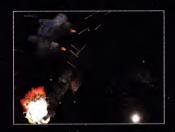








STARRING CLIVE OWEN, MRTHILDA MRY, JOHN HURT, JUAGEN PROCHNOW, DRVID WARNER, BRIRN BLESSED, AND CHRISTOPHER WALHEN AS HASSAN. Casting Director Jeremy Zimmerman. Editor rndy walter. Musical Score by Ary Shulman. Director of Photography Rex Maidment. Screenplay by Dirne Durne. Roditional Dirlogue by Peter Milligan. Live Action Producer Drvid Harrington. Live Action Director Steve Hilliher. Live Action Co-Producer Michele Crmarda







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Another shoot 'em up makes it to the PC. What is it with these developers? Don't they realise PC owners are contemplative sorts?

Patrick McCarthy is, anyway...



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb (16Mb for Win95)

Processor: 486 DX4/100

Graphics: VGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, all major joysticks

OMETIMES I WAKE UP IN THE middle of the night and think deep thoughts. You know the sort of stuff: Why are we here? What purpose are we serving? What possible explanation can there be for Rory McGrath? Where did I leave my vibrating Noddy and Big Ears (joined at the feet, with special softee rubber hats)? And so on. And then the deep thinking all gets too much, and the fear of oblivion strikes, so that my fists clench so hard my knuckles fly off and shatter the bedside lamp - and I think, "I'm going to go berserk for an hour or so".

Which is where games like SWIV come in. It was a great game on the Amiga (but very hard). It was a great game on the snes and Mega Drive (but very hard). And now it's a great game on the PC (but very hard). And it's got a new 3D look about it.

Whatever the reason for your outburst of violence, at some point you'll be using a jeep (or buggy-type thing), a



(Above left) Ooh, it's all snowy and lovely

(Above middle) Er... ooh, it's all muddy and lovely.

(Above right) Turn those radiators right up... baby.



(Left) See what happens when you drop a match near a cowshed?

(Right) When you go really fast your eyeballs bleed and everything looks red. Honest.

(Far right) Another violence-packed framegrab from the people who brought you the last one.



rocket-firing skidoo, a heavily-armoured lunar landing vehicle, and a hovery space-jet sort of thing - and sometimes you'll be switching between them in the same level. As far as bare shoot 'em up facts go, it's got 18 levels, set in four different types of terrain, with shitloads of power-ups and weapon types. The four different landscapes include Arctic, Lunar and Martian scenarios. And as I said, it's hard.

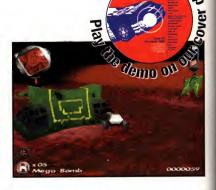
It's hard

Basically, if you don't have the reflexes of a mongoose after six quadruple espressos, you may not get very far in SWIV. It starts off easily enough - you can take your time, line up your shots, look around and see where to go next. But a couple of levels in, it starts getting extremely hectic, and gets better (or worse, depending on your ability). The tactical shoot 'em up approach is rather reminiscent of Desert Strike (shoot the radars to have more chance of sneaking about undetected; achieve certain objectives to reveal certain extra powerups; and so on.) Except that the action is ten times more hectic, and tactics go out the window when panic kicks in.

Whooo-uuuurrrrrgh...

The action takes place in a full 3D landscape, reminiscent of the one in Magic Carpet, but the rising and falling levels, and the way your helicopter hugs the terrain, induces motion sickness at first. Then you get used to it. But then, after about half an hour, it comes back. The game should be sold with a free Puke-o-Bib.





It's not perfect. The auto-aiming device can show a marked preference for targeting trees as opposed to enemy vehicles (although this isn't as serious once the multi-directional mega-weapons start to make an appearance). And the 'realistic physics' on the buggies means, basically, they can get stuck on steep hills, which isn't much fun when three helicopters are blowing the shit out of you.

But despite these minor gripes, it's a good, full-on blast. And it's got some great in-game music - you can choose between the techno stuff or classical, with Night On A Bare Mountain and Ride Of The Valkyries (now known as Music For Chopper-Based Violence). Worth a look. Z

Score

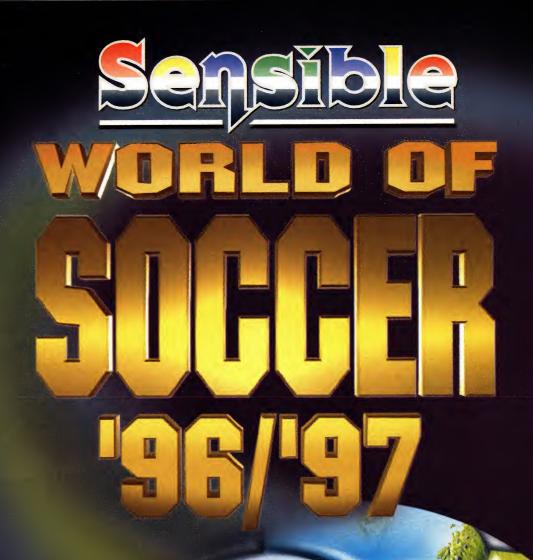


Fast-paced shoot 'em up that's extremely hard.

Price: £39.99 Release Date: Out now Publisher: SCI









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Close Combat





Ed: "On your feet, soldier. You ain't gonna review no more wargames unless you take that goddamned hill, you asshole. Now move your butt!"

Andrew Wright: "You can count on me Captain Wells, sir. Me and the boys won't let you down."

Ed: "Snivelling little creep..."

o FAR, MICROSOFT HAVEN'T HAD A spectacularly successful foray into the world of computer games, but they're rumoured to have put a lot of money and effort into Close Combat. The game was originally going to be based on 'Squad Leader', Avalon Hill's best-selling board wargame but you would never guess that from the finished product because Close Combat is nothing like 'Squad Leader'. In its own way, though, it's just as original and just as addictive. A kind of realistic, overhead Command & Conquer – or Steel Panthers the way it should have been...

In essence, Close Combat is a real-time tactical combat simulation game based around the experiences of the US 29th Infantry Division in Normandy when they were up against the veteran 352nd Germany Infantry regiment. The game provides six different maps that you have to fight across in up to 39 different scenarios. The way the scenarios progress depends on how well (or how

(Above left) Things are a bit pixeliferous in close-up, but hell, ain't life?

(Top right) The help system isn't bad, but the manual is better.

(Right) Street-fightin' US style.

(Below) A combined infantry-armour attack gets results. And casualties.

(Below left) You even get to keep your own personnel records. badly) you do and the number of casualties you sustain.

Because the game is played in realtime, you can't spend hours puzzling out problems and working out neat little counter-attacks, but you can alter the speed and the difficulty level. However, you don't have to order every unit to do something all the time because each soldier has his own personality and team leaders can and will act on their own in the absence of other orders. Sometimes they'll do exactly as they're told, sometimes they'll run away and sometimes they'll just sit tight and fire off all their ammo. The likelihood of individual squads, vehicles, weapon crews and soldiers following orders is directly related to how sensible those orders are, so in that sense this is a pretty fair old simulation of real life blood and guts combat.

Tanked up

The missions and maps are all different with new challenges each time and while there is a preponderance of bocage - the thick Normandy hedgerows - the terrain varies from flat fields to the town of St Lo, all buildings and ruins. Each side has historically accurate equipment ranging from tanks to assault guns, anti-tank guns, mortars, machine guns and so on. Small arms are equally diverse, with tommy guns, carbines, grenades, bazookas and pistols. To add to the realism, you get treated to authentic battle sounds shots, machine gun bursts, explosions, screams, as well as occasional yells and orders from squad leaders.

On the downside, you can't choose your forces at all, which is a shame, nor can you edit the scenarios or maps. Although head-to-head play is possible over a network or serial/modem connection, you've got to stick to the prescribed scenarios. Scrolling is a little





sluggish, but it can be countered by using the keyboard shortcuts and the jump window for moving more quickly around the map.

Close Combat is a big step forward for wargamers, the first in what must be a new generation of real-time superrealistic sims. If you're torn between the strategic bliss of miniatures and hexheavy wargames on the one hand, but you find Command & Conquer (and its ilk) irresistible, this one is a must. Z

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb (16Mb recommended)

Processor: Pentium recommended

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: Windows 95 compatible

Controls: Keyboard, mouse essential

Score



"Oh what a luvverly wargame..."

Price: £44.99 Release Date: Out now Publisher: Microsoft



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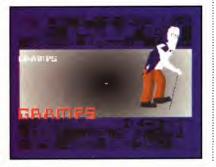




Robotron



Blam, Blam, Blam, Blam, Blam, Blam, Blam, Blam, Blam. Blam. Blam. Blam. Blam, Blam, Blam, Yup, it's Robotron X. Charlie **Brooker** investigates this newly-upholstered version of an arcade legend...



(Left) Who's that walking down the street... it's Grandad. Charlie Quick.

(Below)) Take that! And that! And that! I'll... I'll murdalize the lot of yer. Have at ye! (etc, etc).



Just Williams

The late 70s and early 80s were something of a video gaming renaissance. Teenagers everywhere took to mugging their own grandmothers in order to feed their arcade habit. The games that had them spellbound were, by today's standards, incredibly crude. Blocky graphics. Bleepy sound effects. Basic controls. Ah, but the gameplay... after all, all there was was the gameplay. They couldn't wow you with fractal landscapes, polygon fighters, or impressive light sourcing - all they could do was set you a simple task, and then slowly increase the difficulty. As a result, they were far more addictive than most of today's flabby-arsed exercises in digital posing.

Which brings us to Williams. Williams were responsible for some of the most fearsomely playable coin-ops ever to grace a chip shop. Robotron X is the first of their old titles to be given an 'official' upgrade... but as we shall see, there are others in the works...

CAN'T GET NO SATISFACTION. I'M SICK, sick, I tells ya. I've got some kind of weird flu-type virus and I've been flopping around in bed for four days straight, slowly marinading my pasty carcass with my own feverish sweat. Every time I leave the room I start shivering. My head hurts. The whole world has turned to shit and garbage.

Nowhere to go. Nothing to do. Nothing to do except lie there, staring at Cable TV through dead, unappreciative eyes. Every channel is making me angry. vH-1: Billy Ocean. мтv: some Norwegian himbo called Umlaut or something, trying to interview the fecking Spice Girls. Sky Movies: a 'true story this...' this sucking scum. Some day a real rain's going to come and wash the shit off the streets. I... need... to... sноот... something...

Which is why it's just as well I've got a copy of Robotron X to review. It's just what the doctor ordered.

Happy talk

In case you've never encountered the original Robotron (either in the arcades, or as part of the Williams Classics pack that came out a few months back), allow me to explain. The robots of the world have risen, and started exterminating their masters (ie. us human types). With alarming efficiency, they've managed to annihilate everybody on the planet except for one family and, naturally, you. You can guess the rest; you have to kill the 'bots and save the remaining members of the last family on Earth.

Still, the plot was never the important thing. What was important was the way it played. Viewed from overhead, it shoved you (yes, you) into a cramped

(Above) What they'll all be wearing on the catwalks of Paris this year. Possibly.

Joust

Games don't get much simpler than Joust. All you had to do was to get your 'knight' (who was sitting on the back of some kind of giant, flying ostrich) to kill all the other 'knights' flying around the screen. The only way to get rid of an opponent was to land on their head. Sounds simple? Ha. It wasn't. Especially when one of the other knights is controlled by another human being.

A little bird tells us that *Joust* is the next Williams title due for a *Robotron*-style revamp. Good news for all, although quite how it's going to work is anyone's guess. Watch this space for more information as and when we get it.

electronic arena, populated with about 10,000 psychotic robots. You could run in any direction, and shoot in

any direction – the important point being that you didn't have to fire in the same direction that you were travelling. If you see what I mean.

To this end, the arcade cabinet had two joysticks stuck on the front – one for movement, one for shooty-bang-bangs. The gameplay couldn't be simpler – all you had to do was keep on moving and firing – but somehow it could hold your attention for ages. It never let up. Chaos, carnage, and claustrophobia blended together to produce a cathartic nightmare of a game.

This basic concept has been given several overhauls since the original *Robotron* appeared, notably with *Smash TV*, *Loaded*, and even *The Chaos Engine* but now Williams, who were responsible for the game in the first place, have seen fit to drag the original game kicking and shooting into the 90s. Which brings us to *Robotron X*.

Lots of guns

Robotron X is, in many ways, exactly the same as the Robotron of old. The gameplay is identical. After all, as they say, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it". Using a four-button gamepad to mimic the





twin-joystick control system of the original, it's a non-stop exercise in good old-fashioned mindless

killage. Robots come at you from all sides, in a seemingly never-ending stream. You can't stand still for a second (unless you fancy getting your teeth punched through the back of your head, that is). Furthermore, you'd better not stop firing at them either, or they'll be all over you like ants on a lollipop. It's Robotron as it's always been.

What has radically changed is the visuals. Gone

(Above) Boom! Shake, shake, shake the room.

(Below) In the words of Jeff Wayne: and still, they come.

Defender

The one everybody always goes on about. Now, some may denounce me as a heretic for even thinking of saying this, but I have to admit that I never really liked *Defender* all that much. I found it a bit of a pain in the arse to be honest. Too many buttons. Too much reversing direction all the time. Too easy to crash into the bad guys. Still, everybody else in the world seems to love it. If you got really good at it, you could ignore the bulk of the display and merely concentrate on the radar screen at the top instead (although you'd be a big sad show-off if you did).

Whether *Defender* (or it's sequel, *Defender II*) is due for an 'official' facelift is anyone's guess — although two recent games (namely *Scorched Planet* from Criterion, and *Q.A.D.* from Cranberry Source) have more than a few elements in common with this fondly-remembered arcade behemoth.

are the simple blocky sprites of yesteryear, replaced by bang-up-to-date polygon equivalents. The fixed top-down viewpoint has been superseded by an altogether funkier 'roving camera' view which zooms in and out, spins around, and generally does its best to make you feel like some kind of 'rad cyberdude' sorting out a bit of bother in 'rad cyberspace'. It's slick, it's fast, and it's very very smooth (on a decent Pentium, that is).

Now the clever thing here is the way that the programmers and designers



0

Bubbles

This puts in an apperance on the Williams Arcade Classics pack I mentioned earlier. No-one (myself included) seems to remember ever actually seeing this in an arcade, but I happen to love it. It's a bit of an odd one. Basically, you take command of a blob of water, rolling around in a sink. Your mission? To absorb other blobs, while skillfully swerving to avoid spiders and razor blades (???). You also need to keep an eye out for these things that look a bit like witches on broomsticks. Presumably the author had a bloodstream comprised of 50% cannabis resin, and 50% LSD, yet managed to overcome this slight obstacle to produce a cracking nugget of surreal arcade loveliness. Update it today, say I.

(have managed to retain the look and feel of the original. It's kind of hard to explain how they've managed it, but manage it they most certainly have. What you're left with is something that looks very similar to the oldeworlde Robotron, yet at the same time is indisputably modern. In last month's preview, I wrote that it if you imagined a Robotron sequence

sequence taking place in the movie Tron, you'd be pretty close to what

close to what's on offer here. Since I can't think of a better analogy (blame this bloody flu – it's draining my ability to think), I'll stick with that one. It's the most postmodern gaming experience I can imagine. Okay?

But is it any good?

Now that's a tough one. The answer would have to be 'yes' and 'no'. Have you ever seen any of George Romero's classic zombie movies? If you have, you'll know that there's always a scene where one of the characters will suddenly find themselves completely surrounded by a shambling horde of undead nasties, all of them desperately clawing and grasping at the free lunch that's just appeared before them. Just when you think it's all over, the live human stuck



(Left) It may look a bit like a jellyfish, but it's an explosion really.

(Right) Telly Savalas junior in a spot of bother with some robot blokes.



(Above) Even Simon Templar plays Robotron. in the middle will manage to find a way out (usually by shooting the heads off most of the zombies in a manner so grisly and stomach-churning that the BBFC cut out the footage with pruning shears). That's what *Robotron X* is like. All the time. It's got about 200 levels, but they're all pretty much the same – blam, blam, blam, in other words.

Now this is satisfying – very satisfying – for a while, at least. But there's no denying that it also get damned repetitive.

This is a game completely devoid of depth and variety.

Nothing wrong with that if you're just looking for a

quick fix, but don't go
expecting anything more, or
you'll be sorely
disappointed. It's the ideal
game to play for about 20
minutes during a
coffee break when

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major soundcards

Controls: Keyboard, gamepad

you're not enjoying that day in the office, the boss has shouted at you, and your girlfriend's run off with a cyclops. It's a stress buster. No more, no less.

All of which makes it pretty difficult to apply a score to. The mark I've given it here is really pretty generous, when you compare it to something like *Quake* or *Tomb Raider*. That's because I'm assuming that you (yes, you) are a shoot 'em up fan, who's both familiar with the original *Robotron*, and curious to know how this compares.

The rest of you can just turn the page and read about something else instead. Okay? **z**

Score



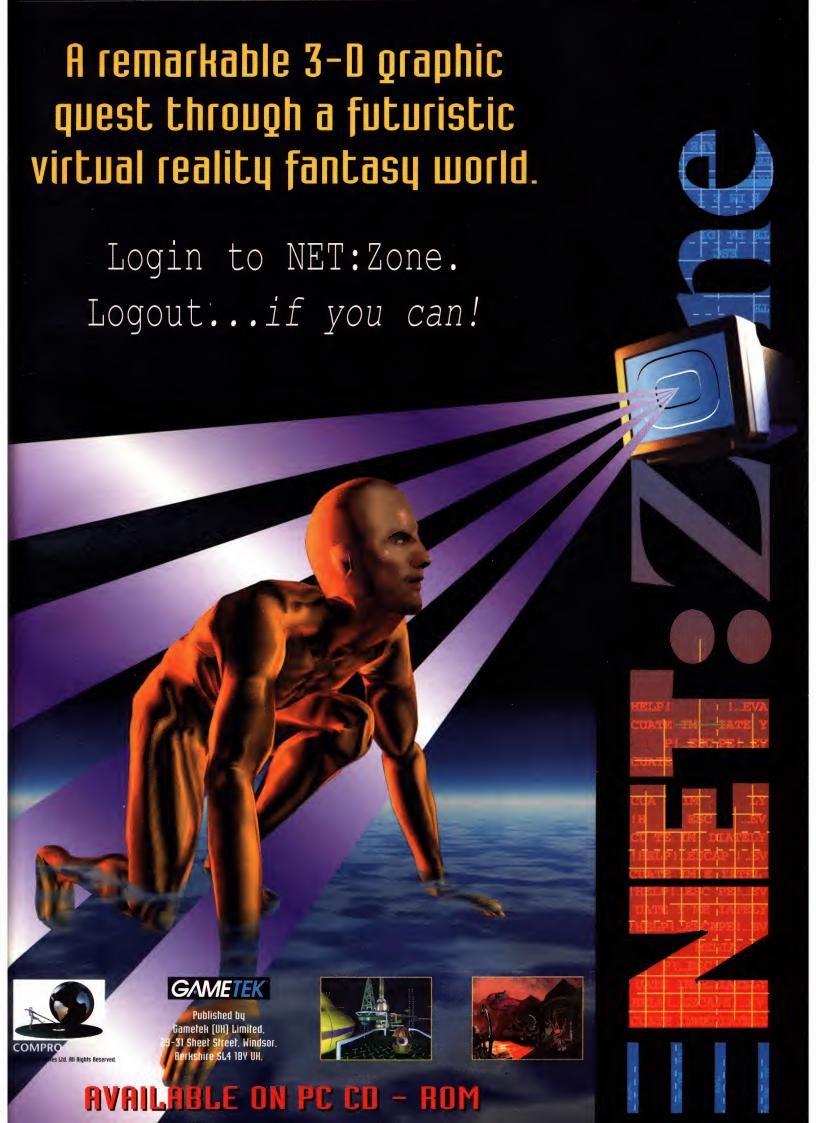
Just like the first one, only more so.

Price: £39.95 Release Date: Out now Publisher: GT Interactive Tel: 0171 258 3791



The People's Choice











Why did we call this section 'Pick 'n' Mix'? Because it contains candy-coated pieces of gaming confection? Charlie Brooker knows the real reason: it's because 'This Section Of The Mag Is Full Of The Stuff We Couldn't Be Arsed To Discuss In Greater Detail' wouldn't fi...

THE NEVERHOOD



All I said was, "Those are rather large curtain rings..."

HE EXCEPTIONAL GRAPHICAL STYLE OF THE Neverhood, made possible by three tons of multi-coloured clay and an army of Minolta digital cameras, is similar to the famous works of Nick Park and Aardman Animations - the people who brought us the Oscar-winning Wallace and Gromit.

From the moment the thumb print-encrusted intro kicks in, an impressive concoction of weird and wonderful sights and sounds conspires to hide what is essentially a rather simplistic point-and-click adventure with a rigidly linear structure.

The aim of the game is to find out who you are, where you are and why you came to being. Exploring the titular plasticene town with your wobbling hero. Klaymen, while solving the numerous logic puzzles thrown up to block your route, will uncover more and more about your predicament. Collecting a series of entertaining in-game videos proving an interesting way of piecing the plot together.

The Neverhood is a relatively lonely experience as adventure games go. There are few characters with which to converse - in fact, conversation between Klaymen and others is restricted to quite late on in the game, which is a pity because the visual and vocal talents employed to bring them to life could have made for a much more rewarding experience if there had been more earlier in the game.

My biggest gripe, though, has to be the price of the thing - 50 pounds is a lot to pay for The Neverhood, and, with around 60 puzzles to complete in the entire game, that works out at almost a pound a puzzle. Sure, it looks great, sounds great and will no doubt appeal to the kind of people that rock



Aaagh! Fifty smackers for a game? I don't believe it!

backwards and forwards in the isolation of a darkened room, but, let's face it, not many of them get out that much, and even fewer of them have a spare 50 sheets to spend on a single computer game.

Paul Mallinson

Publisher: DreamWorks Interactive

Tel: 0345 002000 Price: £49.99

Internet: Http://www.neverhood.com

ASSASSIN *2015*

HAT DO YOU GET IF YOU MIX UP SOME HIGHquality rendered animation sequences, a storyline jam-packed with espionage and scifi ramblings, and Doom? A great big bundle of fun? Er, not quite. Actually, what you get is Assassin 2015, and it's a bit of a mess. There are patently some extraordinarily talented computer animation experts on Blue Sky's payroll, but atmospheric FMV segments are worth absolutely dick all in the gameplay stakes. Anyone remember Phantasmaboria?

What's more, the Doom-style bits are a massive pain in the neck, thanks to the unwieldy control system, which expects you to walk around and open doors using the keyboard, whilst aiming your crosshair with the mouse. It might as well expect you to pick up matchsticks with your arse cheeks at the same time for all I care, though it's probably not as much fun. All in all, it gets full marks for presentation,



Aw shit, I wish I'd gone for the turbo 'picking matchsticks up with your arse cheeks' option.

and none for everything else - hence the fencesitting nature of the score. Americans will probably love it, because they seem to be addicted to FMV visuals and fancy graphics, We Brits aren't that shallow.

Charlie Brooker

Publisher: Blue Sky/Warner Tel: 0171 391 4300

Price: £39.95

SCORE: 50

Note: Windows 95 required



BATTLEGROUND SHILOH



Choose from, oh, dozens of different scenarios.

AY WHAT YOU WILL ABOUT TALONSOFT, THEY DO churn them out. Number four in the excellent Battleground series is another American Civil War clash, the bloody 1862 Battle of Shiloh. OK, the Yanks are all fixated on the their Civil War. We Europeans (I'm not making a political point – I'm as fashionably anti-European as anyone) would probably prefer them to tackle some different subjects such as the late 18th century battles of Marlborough, one of the Peninsula battles or the Franco-Prussian war.

A number of Talonsoft devotees (that's the polite term for the anoraks who frequent the company's Web site) are clamouring for an ancients scenario. Nice idea but at the moment it looks as though number five in the series will have a naval flavour (*Age of Saih*), while number six looks like yet another Civil War scenario – Antietam. Not that we're sick of the American Civil War.

One good thing about the flood of new releases is

Web's wonders

It's worth pointing out that Talonsoft's Web site (http://www.talonsoft.com) has worthwhile upgrades for all the games in the *Battleground* series. They're big files but well worth a download. Better still, nag Empire Interactive and get them to release an upgrade CD...



Shiloh woods. Nice place for a picnic



If looks could kill, Shiloh would beat the shit out of you.

that the game system is constantly evolving and the artificial intelligence is coming on in leaps and bounds. *Shiloh* has the newer features of *Battleground Waterloo*, such as play by e-mail and battle recording, but the same rules as *Gettysburg. Waterloo*'s skirmishers, infantry squares and extended lines aren't present. Squares and extended lines I can live without (squares weren't a feature of the Civil War anyway), but the skirmishers should be there. Without them, large formations can quickly get minced up by blundering into the range of hidden units. The zone of control rule also stops you using cavalry for probing forward – if they stumble into the ZOC of a concealed enemy infantry unit, they can get massacred. In real



Look at this way - the hex-head's view.

life, they'd just turn and trot off.

There's still the occasional problem with extreme combat results. Your game's running along nicely with reasonable results for musketry and melée. Suddenly, your 800-strong regiment of C quality troops recoils in horror when asked to charge a disordered rabble of 200 E class troops without any terrain or breastwork advantage. While the history of war is full of strange happenings, this can get just a little frustrating.

You do get to experiment with river gunboats and there are two smaller scenarios for cutting your teeth on – the full *Shiloh* scenario is a little daunting.

The scenery is as good as ever and in close up the Battleground 'tabletop' is as stunning as always. For enhanced atmosphere, there are the usual video sequences of Civil War re-enactors and some highly original background music. The hardcopy map is rather unhelpful, but the manual is as polished as ever and full of period piccies. This is another excellent attempt at bringing computer wargames and tabletop miniatures together. We're nearly there but not quite.

Andrew Wright

Publisher: Empire Interactive

Tel: 0181 343 7337 Price: £44.99

Internet: Http://www.talonsoft.com

SCORE: 78

LIGHTHOUSE

SURPRISE GEM IN THIS MONTH'S SELECTION.

Normally, I can't stand *Myst*-style adventures – their 'exquisite graphics' always remind me of Roger Dean album covers (which I truly despise), and since I have the attention span of a speed-addled hummingbird, their slow pace often sends me up the wall after about 30 seconds.

One look at the packaging for *Lighthouse* – ponceyarsed posturing by the skipload – and I'd more or less written it off before I played it.

Well, shucks folks, I was wrong. Quite how they've managed it I couldn't say, but despite owing a very heavy debt to the aforementioned *Myst*, *Lighthouse* drew me in from the very beginning.

It's ponderous without being tedious, beautiful without being bland, and quirky without being obscure. I don't want to mention anything about the plot – far better that you should begin the game without a clue

as to what's about to happen – but I will tell you that although the mystery begins in the 'real world', things get very weird, very quickly.

You'll be dealing with baby-napping demons with bad teeth, befuddling Hellraiser-style puzzle boxes, and plenty of keys, switches and seemingly inaccessible areas. And yes, there are quite a few 'Roger Dean' locations in there, but under the circumstances I'll forgive that.

If you're after a healthy dose of intrigue and stimulation, and you're patient by nature, you could do far worse than giving this game a shot. Just don't expect a whip-cracking pace or you'll want to hurl the thing straight out the window and into a nearby dustbin, pretty graphics or no. Oh, and don't forget to dust off the old brainbox.

Charlie Brooker



Yup, that's a lighthouse in the Myst-like, misty distance.

Publisher: Sierra Tel: 01734 303322 Price: £39.95

Note: Windows 95 required



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BACK TO BAGHDAD



Graphics are neat, but there's no incentive to keep playing

F YOU THINK TORNADO IS A BIT LIGHTWEIGHT, AND have a P133 or better, read on. If you like your simulators a little simplified, don't have a ninja PC or have even an ounce of political correctness, turn the page - you're gonna hate this.

Back to Baghdad is the sort of thing that I should get all excited and unnecessary over. It offers a very high fidelity flight model, excellent graphics, superb levels of detail as far as avionics and so on go. In fact, everything I ever complain about except network

support is covered here. You even get to use nukes. Trouble is, after spending an hour getting used to the radar and targeting requirements, that was really it. The missions are tough, and the enemy pilots seem able to lock you up before you've adjusted the azimuth and sweep pattern on your radar to target them.

The flight model is very good, although the demands made on your processor mean that the dreaded jerkovision can raise its ugly head on a few occasions. Graphics are neat, although there is some clipping in the external views which spoils things a little (although I'm really being picky here) and the ground looks less than convincing at low level.

No matter how hard the missions got, there was never any real drive to carry on and do the next one. The sim is realistic, but its attitude puts me right off. Now, I'm probably one of the least PC people you'll ever meet, but I find the idea of a simulator whose sole objective is to take you through to the point where you can nuke a city somewhat less than palatable. This should have been Falcon 4, but to me at least it'll never be more than a pretty but empty toy. Buy it, fly it, beat it; just don't expect to keep coming back to it.

Simon Bradley



Buy it, fly it, beat it, put it back in the box.

Publisher: Enemy Lock On Tel: 01628 662424 Price: £58.00 inc P&P Internet: dsilk@elo.com

SCORE: 65

ASTROROCK

OORAY! ASTEROIDS CLONE! HUZZAH! LET JOY be unconfined! Let's peel our clothes off and run naked through the streets, kissing strangers and singing Boney M medleys and, uh-oh. What's this? It's called Astrorock. Where the 'rock' refers to 'Rock and Roll' - the sort of lame-arsed 'rock' that gets played over the end credits of every really bad action movie you've ever seen. Ergh. And it's really hard to play as well - in an irritating way, not an 'I'll just have one more go' sort of way. And the multiplayer mode isn't as good as Star Control or SubSpace (which you can download for free from the Internet).

And the Mac version comes on the same CD. Say no more.

Let's not peel our clothes off after all. Let's stay at home with all the lights off, grumbling in the dark.

Charlie Brooker

Publisher: Atlantean Interactive

Tel: 01483 451150 Price: £24.99



Haemorrhoids rather than Asteroids, I'm afraid.

BUBBLE BOBBLE



Somewhere over the rainbow, I said, somewhere over the...

HE RETRO GAMES MOVEMENT FORGES EVER onward (or should that be backward?) with this delightful repackaging of two classic Japanese arcade games: Bubble Bobble and its sequel Rainbow Islands (plus an 'enhanced - ie. slightly prettier - version of the latter). As with most early games, the gameplay itself is strikingly simple, yet so surreal and abstract by nature that I daren't attempt to explain what actually happens in either of them in case the back of my head explodes. Let's just say that Bubble Bobble revolves around bubble-spitting dragons, and Rainbow Islands centres on, well, rainbows actually.

Both of them also feature many different types of cake - something I'd like to see more of in today's comparatively snack-free releases. Anyway, they're arcade-perfect (right down to the gurgly, impossibly cute soundtracks), and - most important of all - still fun to play. Ideal fodder for dewy-eyed nostalgists or anybody who spends a sizeable proportion of their income on small bags of special herbs.

Charlie Brooker



Er, the idea is to bibble your bobble until it bubbles, I think..

Publisher: Acclaim/Taito Tel: 0171 344 5000 Price: £29.95

Internet: www.Aclaim.com

SCORE: 80

THREE SKULLS OF THE TOLTECS



Voilà, two skulls of the Toltecs. You don't want to see the third.

HINGS DON'T BODE WELL WITH THREE SKULLS from the off, when it commits the cardinal sin of playing a dull, lengthy opening sequence (complete with credits, for everybody from the office

teaboy up) which you can't skip past. Once you've finished grinding your teeth and shifting around restlessly in your seat, it settles down to become an amiable, somewhat garish point'n'click adventure with some fairly decent animation and a gentle (ie. fey) sense of humour. Unless I'm very much mistaken, it's a foreign-language title that's been dubbed into English; this may explain (but not excuse) the distinctly feeble nature of the jokes. Anyone who successfully piloted their way through Monkey Island et al will find this about as much of a challenge as a game of Tic-Tac-Toe with half the squares already filled in. Newcomers to the genre will probably appreciate it more, especially since this offering breaks the first commandment of adventure games: Thou Shalt Not Feature Interminably Long and Tedious Conversations At The Drop Of A Hat.

Charlie Brooker



What do you call three holes in the ground? Well, well, well.

Publisher: Revistronic/Warner Tel: 0171 391 4300

Price: £39.95

Note: Windows 95 required

SCORE: 70



OLYMPIC SOCCER

F I HAD A PENNY FOR EVERY SUB-STANDARD football game that's paraded through the Pick 'n' Mix section in recent months, I'd have just about enough money for a packet of crisps. Olympic Soccer



Ferk me, the ball has just fouled that player's foot.

is – surprise, surprise — tied in with the Atlanta Olympics. Does anyone actually watch the soccer matches that take place during the Olympics? They're never very interesting – which may go some way towards explaining why this is as lacklustre as it is. 'Live the dream,' it says on the front of the box. Well, if you've ever had dreams about uncontrollable, garish football matches taking place in Teletext land, this is your chance to make them a reality.

The PlayStation version might be alright, but this is better only than *Microsoft Soccer* which is so unplayable it makes you wonder if they actually employ playtesters. You can normally forgive footie games for looking crap if they play alright (ie. *Sensi Soccer*), but this effort has little to offer the footie fan brought up on a diet of *FIFA* and *Actua Soccer*.

Charlie Brooker



I say, old chap, on my head Jonathan. Thanks awfully.

Publisher: Eidos Tel: 0181 780 2222 Price: £39.95

SCORE: 32

DEADLY TIDE



Glossy FMV actioner, but Rebel Assault it's not.

OLLOWING POSSIBLY THE LENGTHIEST rendered animation sequence this side of *Toy Story, Deadly Tide* reveals itself as a particularly glossy entry in the FMV shoot 'em up stakes. There's a deeply uninteresting storyline ('Independence Day' meets 'The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau'), some very snazzy visual

effects, and an endless number of things to aim your mouse pointer at. So far, so Rebel Assault - but wait a minute. Deadly Tide is a bit different from most FMV action marathons in that it also features sections which aren't 'on rails' - ie. you can actually control the movement of your ship from time to time. Unfortunately, since these sections spring up on you more or less unannounced, you end up spending half the time trying to work out whether or not you're actually in control. The addition of some rudimentary 'exploration' elements (you can choose which route to take during many of the levels) fails to add much intrigue, yet succeeds in making everything even more confusing. What's more, the endless blasting is repetitive enough to quickly become a mind-dulling chore. Did I like it then? No, not really. Like a handsome-but-vapid womaniser, it'd score a lot less if it wasn't so pretty. Maybe if they spent less money on getting the guys from Voyager to do the graphics and the bloke who did the music to Crimson Tide to do the score they'd have a more rounded game.

Charlie Brooker



Blimey, that's where I left my Meccano set!

Publisher: Microsoft Tel: 0345 002000 Price: £44.99

Note: Windows 95 required



SCORE: 63











Streaking through blood-red sky over vast terrain. Dicing with life and death. Getting up the enemy's nose as much as possible. It's a test like you've never faced before. You'll marvel at F22 Lightning II"'s superior gameplay, gape at the amazing, unique graphics and witness the wailing and gnashing of teeth in glorious digital stereo. It's even more

dangerous and thrilling when you challenge others through network, modem or via direct connect. And just like football, one golden rule applies:

You must get the results. Or you go down.

For more information please telephone NovaLogic on 0171-405 1777 or write to NovaLogic Ltd., 26-27 Boswell Street, London WCIN 3JD.

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Budes Garage!)

This month's round-up is of the titles the game companies are trying to get you to buy because they didn't sell very well the first time, or they did sell well but they won't sell well any more because they're old news or there's a new version coming out soon. Or something.

Transport Tycoon



RANSPORT TYCOON IS ALREADY AVAILABLE IN THE Essential Collections: Business compilation, but this is far and away the best in its pack. It's the follow-up to Railroad Tycoon, incorporating planes and buses into the world-domination shenanigans, and it's beautifully designed and put together – the Sim City 2000 of transport games. This release also has the World Editor add-on disk for... er, world editing fun. Still a classic, especially at this price.

Publisher: Powerplus Price: £9.99

SCORE: 90

orld editing fun. Still e.

Pacific Air War



ACIFIC AIR WAR IS ESSENTIALLY AN AIRCRAFT carrier-based strategy game and flight sim combined, in which you handle the strategy and the flying yourself. The graphics are pretty good for the time and the flight model's decent enough.

The game also comes with F14 Fleet Defender and Wings Of Glory, as part of Essential Collections: Flight, but that's £34.99 and this way gives you more choice.

Publisher: Powerplus

SCORE: 79

Price: £9.99

Eidos Re-launches



and are re-launching a load of Kixx budget games in colour-coded boxes (so you won't get all confused at their cheapness in the shop).

The titles we've already covered which will be retained are *Under A Killing Moon, Flashback, Street-fighter 2, Rise Of The Triad* and *Terminal Velocity. UAKM* is £12.99, the rest are £9.99, and most of them are still worth parting with your readies for. They've also got a load of new budget games, including *Big Red Racing* and *Championship Manager 2* reviewed opposite. We'll bring you more details on the rest of the new titles next month.

Big Red Racing



MANIC AND ENJOYABLE ARCADE RACER, LIKE A sort of first-person viewed *Micro Machines*. You race about in a number of unusual locations in a number of even more unusual vehicles (snow ploughs, monster trucks, helicopters, etc).

Given the current fad for all things Michael Caine-y, the fact that you can also recreate *The Italian Job* in a mini seems well-timed. And for a tenner, you can't go wrong (Guv).

Publisher: Kixx Price: £9.99

SCORE: 80

PC VONE RECOMMENDED

F14 Fleet Defender



A HEAVYWEIGHT FLIGHT SIM THAT DOESN'T MATCH Tornado, but is pretty good. It's also included as part of the Essential Collections: Flight. Worth checking out if you're a bit of a propellor-head, or prepared to forego modern fancy photo-realistic graphics for a semi-realistic flight model and a few extra fps.

Publisher: Powerplus Price: £9.99

SCORE: 79

Champ Manager 2



C M2 IS NOW AVAILABLE AS A NEW SEASON upgrade. The teams are last season's squads but given that you're going to change them anyway, this may not bother you. Which is why it's difficult to score: it's a stunningly addictive game; whether you buy this version is a matter of personal choice. Oh, and I'm assured that this version incorporates the 'patch', which sorted out any 'poaching' problems among other things.

Publisher: Kixx Price: £12.99

SCORE: 92

CUMANGAE



TIME TO GET YOUR CHOPPER OUT.







The Comanche®RAH-66". It's a nasty piece of work. Seize the controls for yourself in Comanche®3, the all-new state-of-the-art combat helicopter game. Featuring an incredible 3D landscape powered by the revolutionary new Voxel Space 2" graphics engine. Startlingly crisp digital stereo. And multiplayer capability through network,

modem or via direct connect.

Can you beat it? Over our dead bodies.

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"HOLIDAY IN VIRTUALAND"

episode four

by charlie brooks

THE STORY SO FAR...

hasn't been worth following. Look. All you need to know is that that girl there has been turned into a sort of computer thing and she's currently stuck inside a game of Quake. Innit?





















Underground, Overground, Shambling free, The Shamblers of Wimbledon Common are we



Making good use of the things that we find, Torsos and ribeages, Giblets and spines



It was a sunny day on Wimbledon Common, and the Shamblers had just finished tidying up all the litter, like the caring, concerned beings they were.



"Hooray!" cried the little ones, and they danced a joyous little jig upon the green. Because they were nice. Really nice. Not a bad bone in their bodies.



'm going to rest in this deckehair', gasped Tobergory, Tm bushed." He dozed off to sleep and dreamt about uppies, and the little baby Jesus, and lovely things like that. Because he was nice too.



Just then Horinoco spotted a little man hiding in the bushes. "Hello, little man!" cried Horinoco. "Shift", shouted the man. And he ran away as fast as his legs would carry him.



So Horinoco shattered the bastard into a million gibs, thereby singlehandedly ruining the Shamblers' change of image in a thrice...

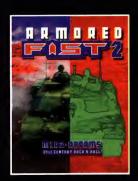


R R II I R E D









You'll be surprised what you can take to pieces in Armored Fist®2. It's the ultimate of all tank simulations. Get to grips with the rolling fury of the M1A2[™] Abrams. Experience the 3D realism created by NovaLogic's stunning new Voxel Space 2[™] graphics. Hear the thundering sounds of vicious armed combat in piercing, digital stereo sound. Naturally, you can

even hook up with your friends over a network, modem or via direct connect.

Just don't expect them to be your friends for long.

And never expect to live forever, Trevor.

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TEATURE TO THE TORE OF THE TURE

PC ZONE

It's in the post!

o, we're not about to give you a knitting pattern for a new style of shoplifting cardigan, or the address of a good hold-up man. We're going to encourage you to get your games via mail order – and tell you what to look out for before you do. But first, we'll explain exactly why computer games are so expensive in the shops.

Shop till you drop

You probably dislike games shops, and think that they're coining it in hand over fist at your expense. Despite what you may think, however, for the majority of small retailers life is a continual struggle – one which many of them won't survive. It wasn't always like this, of course. Back in the glory days of 1990, all you had to do if you wanted to rake in the moolah was open a PC business. Then you sat back and waited for the gullible punter to come skipping through your door, eager to shove a load of over-priced games on their brand-new credit card.

As far as profit margins went, the big retailers were buying the top games for £25 a piece and flogging them at the full £50 RRP. Behind the scenes, all concerned quietly agreed not to do nasty things like give discounts. The consumer paid full whack and that was that. Then in 1992 a company called Future Zone (now Electronics Boutique) popped up. Apparently not belonging to the same Masonic Lodge as the rest of the retailers, they did



(Above) One of Special Reserve's shops – join their club and you'll be treated to one of the cheapest and best mail order services around. the unthinkable – they discounted in a big way: £49.99 games became £28; £39.99 titles became £20.

A rock and a hard place...

And while Future Zone started putting on the pressure from one side, Virgin started doing likewise from the other. Like many other publishers, they were getting a bit miffed at Johnny Retailer running off with half the sponds. Simon Jeffries, Vice President of Marketing at Virgin, says: "If retailers were able to knock £10 per title off the RRP there was obviously something very

Eight steps to heaven

Although we're recommending getting your games by post, you can get your fingers burned. All anyone has to do to run a mail order company is compile a list of games, buy advertising space in a magazine and they're in business. They simply wait for the orders to come in, tell everyone everything's in stock and then order it in from the distributors. Who cares whether you, the customer, have to wait two or three weeks for the game?

The problem for the consumer is that one mail order ad can look pretty much the same as any other, so there's no way of telling the type of company you're dealing with — or is there? Here are our tips on how to tell the good from the bad, and how to get the best out of the best, and when you turn the page you'll see a list of some companies you can trust:

- Pick a company that advertises every month in loads of mags, and is open seven days a week. One-man companies can't afford that amount of advertising and can't be bothered working seven days a week.
- **2** Don't always go hunting for the lowest price you can find. Good after-sales service costs money, and you're unlikely to get it from the cheapest outfit around.
- 3 Ask if you can return a game if you don't like it. The better companies offer this and it's a good reason to buy mail order most High Street shops will stare in amazement at the very thought that you should ask.
- Check the game's in stock before ordering, or be prepared for what can be a long wait. If the publishers themselves have run out, it can take an awfully long time before they get more printed or imported (usually from the States).
- 5 Look for the small print and work out the total cost of the game before ordering some companies make their games look cheaper by putting VAT and/or postage charges on top of the quoted price.
- Ask for a delivery time and ask the name of the person you're talking to. If the game is delayed you should ask to speak to the same person again. This not only puts them nicely on the spot, but if there has been a mistake they may know what has happened when you're manning the phones you'd be surprised how easy it actually is to remember individual customers, especially if you've messed up the order...
- Pay by credit card, not cheque or debit card. You have greater legal protection, and won't have to wait a week for a cheque to clear before they even despatch the goods.
- Don't be too put off if they tell you an advertised game's not been released yet, or the price is higher than they printed in the ad. As long as they tell you this *before* taking your money it's probably the publisher's fault, not an intentional underhand trick. Mail order companies have to rely on information from the publishers ahead of time and publishers have a hell of a habit of changing things at the last minute, after the ads have gone to press.

(Left) Postal power – get your games mail order and save some sponds to go out and get yourself a life.

FEATURE INOZ DE INOZ D

The good guys

lere are some mail order companies that I can recommend. Special Reserve (01279 600204), though you have to join their club, are about the biggest and best around, and are an honest bunch. If they're out of stock you could do worse than try Gameplay (01924 473157). Though they're the new kids on the block, they still offer a good level of service and due to the haggling abilities of their boss, Dylan Wilk, they have quite a few special offers and bargains. Others worthy of consideration are Premier Mail Order (01268 271172) a bit cheap and cheerful, but a wellestablished company with good prices, while Software Warehouse (01675 466467) and Watford Electronics (01582 745555) are both handy for any nongame titles you might be after.

wrong and the retailer margins definitely needed to come down."

Consequently, *The 7th Guest* went out at £42 trade – a 40% discount off the £69 RRP, instead of the usual 50%. Some stores didn't take it, fearing it would set a precedent. They were right. From then on all Virgin releases were only discounted at 40%, and the other publishers soon followed suit. Time to sell your games shop and retire to Benidorm – or open a mobile phone shop.

The final nail

The upshot of all this is that retail outlets have less and less room for manoeuvre in their pricing. Some publishers have now given up on RRPS and simply sell their titles at a fixed trade price. Al King, Marketing Manager for EA, says: "This means that we're setting no guidelines and are leaving the shops completely free to set whatever price is best for their own competitive advantage."

What it really means is that the companies are selling the stuff for what they think they can get for it, and sod the consequences. You now have situations where, for example, Dixons and HMV are selling *F1GP2* at £29.99 – just £2 above what independent retailers buy it for. They can afford to do that because it gets people into the shop and

(Above) Crisp 'n' Clive hang out!

(Right) Baku Baku, Quake, Links LS and RAC Rally, all of these popular games can be bought for less on mail order. they might sell something else with a bigger profit margin on it – not necessarily a game. The independents can't do this. And apart from the attention-grabbing examples we've all seen, most of the prices of the big games are still too expensive – even in the megastores – squeezed up by the publishers, rather than the retailers. So what to do?



Mail order companies don't have the overheads of a High Street retailer. They mainly sell games for only £3 to £4 above the price they paid (rather than the £10 to £15 the shops make) and the bigger companies offer a far greater choice than many shops. It's bargain city, if you know where to shop, and you don't mind waiting a few days more for the game you've already been waiting for since you read the review three months earlier. We've all been there, and sometimes, no matter how big a saving you might make, the need to have the game in your sweaty hands overrides everything else - and bugger the extra tenner. But if you can wait, there are

CONTROL OF THE PROPERTY OF THE





financial gains, and apart from anything else, where else can you try a game and return it if you don't like it? Some mail order companies let you do this. Check out the handy tips list to see what you should do, anyway. Z



(Below) Descent 2:

£27.99 on mail

order against an

RRP of £39.99.



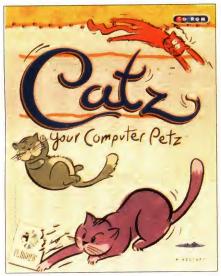
The Japs' Eye

If you think the developers and games companies have got the retail outlets under their thumb when it comes to PC games, spare a thought for console owners. Not only are they stuck with inferior machines that take about two hours to access different elements of a game, but they have to pay more for their games, too. And usually, they're games that were out on the PC a year ago at a lower price.

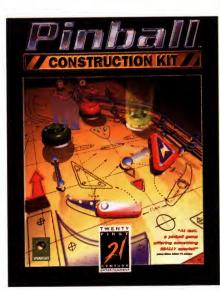
Basically, the Japanese have the console market stitched up tighter than a mallard's waste outlet. If you're a games company who wants to write a game for them, you'd better be ready to pay a 'gratuity' (that's a 'kick back' in plain English) to the machine's owner for every copy of the game you sell. This is because behind the scenes the Japanese work by selling their machines at cost price — so they look relatively cheap in the shops — and then they just rake the money back from the software publishers — (and ultimately the consumer) via the games.

Some big console makers even tell the shops what price to sell games for – and anyone who tries to discount the games will be told to stop doing so. If the shop persists, the machine manufacturers simply refuse to supply them with goods. The hard-hitting Monopolies and Mergers Commission then swing into action five years after the event and tell the Japs if they ever do it again they'll get their wrists slapped. So the Japanese employ a slightly different tactic next time and it's another five years before the M&M boys catch up.

If you want the latest CD ROMs, Woolworths will press your buttons.



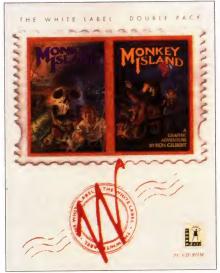
£14.99



£29.99



£49.99



£14.99



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And, of course, the Sound Blaster 32 is fully

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Introducing Sound Blaster 32 PnP. Hear What You've Been Missing





SpaceOrb 360

Dave Mathleson wonders if the best way of controlling games like *Descent* is using a funny thing with a ball on it.

HILE THE PHRASE 'VIRTUAL reality' is often used to describe first-person games like Duke Nukem 3D and

Quake, they're not really true vr programs. "Who cares?" you

(Below) Have a ball when you play firstperson shoot 'em ups.



wi

you'd be right, but wouldn't it be excellent if they really were.

Everyone knows that 'true' VR is where you wear a stupid helmet that gives you 3D vision, but even with one of these you still don't move around the virtual world in a normal way. The problem with mice, joysticks and keyboards is that they're not very natural, and to get the six degrees of freedom that 3D movement is comprised of, you need more than one controller at a time.

The SpaceOrb 360 is a 3D gamepad that uses an odd rubber ball arrangement to provide all the right axes (as in the plural of axis, not the crappest weapon in *Quake*). Basically, you hold the thing like a normal gamepad and move the ball with your left hand, keeping the right free for the six buttons.

Setup is easy, as it plugs into the extra com port not being used by your mouse. It supports all the usual games, and it comes with demo versions of Descent 2 and Duke Nukem 3D.

In use, the SpaceOrb is pretty odd, and not as intuitive as you'd expect. Apart from being able to twist the ball along three axes, you can also push and pull it, giving six degrees of freedom in total. This is more than enough for all the clever strafy movements in *Descent*, which is the single game most suited to the SpaceOrb's abilities. The problem is that it's not always apparent whether you're twisting or pulling, and while you can combine moves, it's not always easy to combine running forwards with, say, looking around.

It's difficult to review something as different as the SpaceOrb, since you'd probably need about a month to get totally accustomed to it. I haven't had this long, but I reckon in the right hands it could be a real winner. Call me a setinmy-ways old tosser, but I'm sticking with my mouse/keyboard combination. **Z**

Score



An interesting gamepad with a rubber ball on it.

Price: £TBC Release Date: December Publisher: Contemporary Games Tel: 01454 855050



The People's Choice

Interactor Backpack

Duncan Swain put his backpack on and decided it was high time to head vest. (Groan – Ed.)

r's NOT EVERYDAY THAT YOU CAN USE something originally designed by top US defence boffins for the Space Shuttle with your humble PC but that's what Aura, makers of the Interactor Backpack, claim was the intended purpose for some of this rather expensive gadget's technology.

The Interactor, as its name suggests, is yet another way for on-screen entertainment to reach out and affect you physically. Strap on the vest, crank up Mortal Kombat, Quake or anything with decent sound effects, and you'll soon be feeling a series of low frequency sound waves gyrating your internal organs in response to whatever your sound card is

(Below) You too could look like a plastic turtle.

pumping out. Between the sound card and the backpack is a control module allowing adjustment of effects: turn it up and the merest whisper will rattle your teeth, turn it down and only a direct hit from a BFG will be noticeable.

The Interactor is not solely intended for use with a PC: a bundle of connectors is supplied so it can be hooked up to your hi-fi, surround sound TV or whatever to give you the same effects when you're watching Terminator 2 for instance – if you don't feel too much of a knob wearing it in the first place. Z

Score



Definitely not fantastic but not crap either.

Price: £69.99 Release Date: Out now Publisher: Aura Interactive

dan Personal Computers The People's Choice

Wizzard PC Pinball Controller

A terrible pun about pinball wizards and Tommy should have gone in here, but thankfully Duncan Swaln thought better of it.

(Right) It's not a dolphin, but it's

ETRO GAMING IS CURRENTLY in vogue, old school classics such as *PacMan*, *Defender* and *Battlezone* are re-appearing on PCS the world over, thanks to Microsoft, and emulators right back to the trusty Spectrum and ZX81 have also been making a (hopefully) brief resurgence. But you can't get any more retro than the granddaddy of all arcade games – pinball.

definitely a flipper.

All that's been missing from the memory of those smoky old arcade days is the right sort of controlling device to convince you that you're actually playing pinball and not pressing the space bar on your keyboard. Now ThrustMaster have overcome that obstacle with the Wizzard Pinball Controller.

The Wizzard consists of two flippers which slot under your keyboard (attaching to the sides by velcro) but any pinball player will tell you that flippers are only a small part of pinball – what about nudging and tilting? ThrustMaster have thoughtfully built these functions into the Wizzard. The flippers contain small balls that move when the keyboard is nudged, tripping optical sensors: nudge gently and

you control the ball's path, nudge too hard and you tilt.

As yet there are few games compatible with the Wizzard; Virgin's Hyper 3D Pinball is one, and you do get Royal Flush from Amtec bundled with the controller, but more are promised. Also bear in mind that your game port must be able to handle dual joysticks.

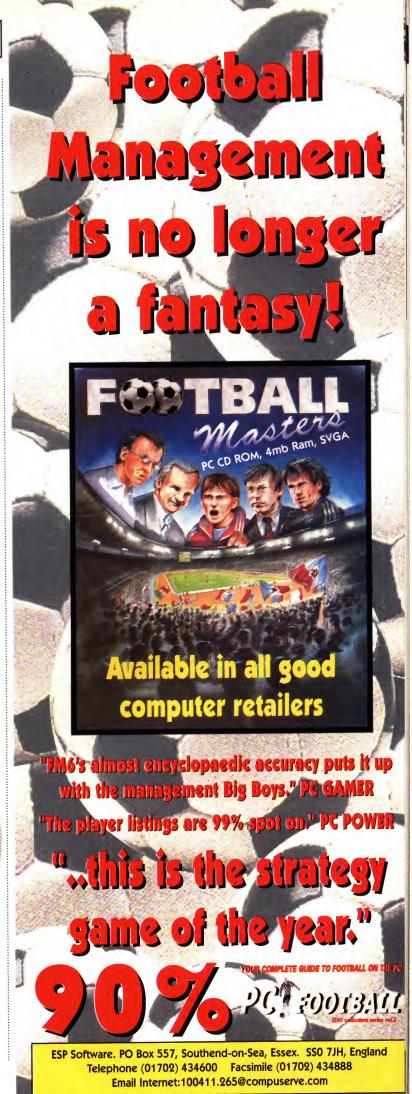
Score

If you like pinball it's good,

if you hate pinball it's bad.

Price: £TBC Release Date: Out now Publisher: Contemporary Games Tel: 01454 855050

dan 7he People's Choice



RC SIMULATIONS PRESENTS

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More good news for British Telecom. This month, *Meridian 59* – the on-line 'universe' – hits the street, boasting an entire alternative reality for those socially impoverished enough to apply. If that means 'you' (and two to one it does), then please, go ahead. Read our throughly comprehensive 'write-up'. And don't come crying to us in six months' time when you're addicted, and your skin is suffering from Programmer's Paleness, and your fingernails are all long, and you've been married in cyber-wedlock to a Harlem boxer called Gerald (by mistake). He may have said he was a girl.





(Above & left) "Oh goody, more *Quake* captions." "Be serious, OK?" "OK, bang, bang, bang, squelch."

(Below) "And yet more."
"Stop complaining, the *Quake* servers are a neat way of getting real life belligerent factions to talk." "OK, bang!"

One notable addition to the list is the Minos server at 194.217.248.15. It's fast. Very fast, in fact, as it's running off a Pentium Pro 200 with 128Mb of RAM. And it's also connected to the educational SuperJanet network so if you're a university student – God help you – you can probably have ridiculously speedy games. For further info, look up the website at www.beyond2000.co.uk/minos (which may have been changed to www.minos.co.uk by the time you read this...)

MILTIPLAY ORGAN WOT!

Also popping up this month are our old friends, Multiplay. Once just a famed BBS for *Doom*, *WarCraft II* and *Descent* multi-player, the Multiplay chappies have branched somewhat cleverly into the *Quake* server market. If you already have an account with Multiplay, you can automatically use their *Quake* server for the ludicrously affordable price of £10 per month. And because they're a direct dial-up service, there's only one 'hop' from your

machine to their server, meaning incredibly low pings and very smooth games. If you want more info (and you should), just phone o181 900 1266 using any communications program (even Terminal in Windows) and there'll be plenty of guff on-screen to tell you how to set it up.

Naturally, our chums at CIX Internet still remain top of the list of servers. Although you have to have a CIX IP account to exploit it, their server is currently the fastest game of Internet *Quake* you'll get in Europe. Thus far. It's at 194.153.1.2, so phone 0181 296 9666 for more details.

If, however, you're feeling the walletache of multiple IP accounts and phone bills, and want a taste of what the future holds for Internet gaming, leapfrog to 194.119.129.200 or 207. This is Intel's own official *Quake* server, using state-of-the-art hardware. Quite frankly, despite the fact it's buried in some basement in the US somewhere, surrounded no doubt by empty 'Hershey bar' wrappers, it burns. Give it a go.



currently, in the UK alone, there are around 25 servers in operation, most with open access for anyone with a copy of the game and an Internet Provider (IP) account. Some, typically the student-run ones, are only open during the day. Others just keep rolling on and on, 24 hours. Often you can just log in and find a game empty, bar a few dead bodies and stray limbs here and there.

This is what is called 'amusing'.







A walking, talking, living RPG on the Internet? Warren Chrismas could hardly believe his elven ears so he pulled on his troll trousers and headed for the dungeons. Ooo-er.

Meridian, 59



(Left) FireWalker was boring us... so we killed him. That's fair,

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX/66

Graphics: VGA, SVGA

Sound: All Win 95 compatible soundcards

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

Note: SLIP/PPP Internet connection required

might be sitting all boxed and shiny on the shelves of your local software dealer much like any other game, but *Meridian* 59 can *only* be played on the Internet. It's not a one-player game. At all. Also, while the game runs over a standard PPP/SLIP connection via your local ISP (Internet Service Provider), to log into the American-based *Meridian* 59 servers you must pay a monthly fee. We're talking \$9.95 (£6.50) a month (payable by credit card only), plus the cost of the phone calls on top of the £39.99 for the actual game. Gulp.

So what's it all about?

Well, in most respects, *Meridian 59* is much like any other fantasy-based RPG. You create a character (or Avatar if you want to be

OR ALL THE TALK IN THE MEDIA OF the 'cyber-community' and online relationships/marriages, the Internet isn't a particularly cool place to hang out and talk to people. Internet Relay Chat – still the most popular way to engage in real-time conversation on the Net – is clumsy to use, saturated with juvenile sex talk (okay, so it's amusing for a while), teeming with blokes pretending to be women and, perhaps more importantly, full of *really* annoying Yanks.

The cool thing about *Meridian* 59, is that if you don't like what others are saying on-line, you can kill 'em! Well, actually, that's not entirely true (as I'll come to in a bit), but then hey, why should a slight distortion of facts ruin a perfectly good introduction?

Studio 3D0 bill Meridian 59 as (deep breath) "the world's first-ever Internetbased 3D graphical Multi-User Dimension game". In plain English, it combines for the

first time the multi-player and roleplaying elements of a traditional textbased MUD, with the kind of 3D graphics engine you'd expect to find in an action-oriented game... albeit a couple of years ago. Think Wolfenstein 3D, not Quake.

But let's clarify a couple of things

(Below) Look, he's waving at us! With a crap name like that, he's gotta die, right?







poncey) - choosing your name (a disproportionate vowel/consonant ratio is a pre-requisite), sex and appearance, and defining your character class by setting attributes such as Might, Intellect and Mysticism - and then enter a vast Medieval-type world featuring towns, forests and mountains; super-natural beasts such as giant rats, mutant ants, orcs and trolls; plus all the kind of weapons, armour and reagents that you'd expect.

The difference here, of course, is that there are dozens, often hundreds, of other human players around. It's not just about adventure and exploration, it's about - eek! - social interaction.

Being an on-going on-line game, there is no ultimate goal in Meridian 59. In truth, there's not a lot to do other than hang around chatting and enhancing your character's strength by killing monsters and learning spells from the various schools. There are quests (given out by the static nonplayer characters) which can be completed for rewards, true, but these are simplistic in the extreme typically find something, then take it somewhere else.

As a result, many players just seem to 'exist' within the environment. communicating via typed messages and the few physical gestures which the game allows (smiling, waving, pointing and so on), eating, drinking, trading, helping each other out, and sometimes even marrying.

(Above) This is, a-hem, me. Pretty, aren't 1?

(Below) The spooky Graveyard. With an, er, golfball in the sky.



Mad, Sad And Dangerous To Know

Play Meridian 59 and you'll meet hundreds of characters. But who are these people? We randomly pulled three players off the streets of Tos, and bullied them with a Mystic Sword and a Level Four Mana Bomb spell until they revealed all. And, hey, don't laugh. While we don't want to come over all Anthea Turner (That's gross - Ed.), just remember, pretty soon, it could be you...

KATHIE WISHART



'Gorgeous' Kathie, a 26-year-old married mother from Florida who describes herself as "Friendly, caring and loving", has been playing Meridian 59 since February 1996 - before 3D0 bought the product from developer Archetype. She plays every day, averaging (gulp), 50 hours a week on-line. "The idea of people from around the world, coming together in one setting to play roles, appeals to me," she tells



us, as if we're auditioning for Miss World or something. Asked what she dislikes about the game, she replied: "There isn't anything I don't like about it, actually.

But tonight... Kathie is Amaranth! Described by Kathie as "a good person, but a bit insane... chaotic good", Amaranth has been known to 'take out' People Killers, and has been killed herself in Guild Wars. She's completed numerous small quests for NPCs and killed both the Ghost and Queen Spider (the toughest nasties in Meridian). Amaranth used to be a member of the Banshees – a guild of all-women warriors, not Siouxsie Sioux's backing band - but is currently embarking on a solo career of helping people out.



Pavel is a 19-year-old System Administrator who lives with his parents in Prague in the Czech Republic. He describes himself as a "normal active young boy, who likes girls, music, computers, Aiki-Do and parties". He plays Meridian 59 around three or four days a week, averaging 15-25 hours a week. He likes the "other players thinking like people, not like computers", but thinks the game needs bigger



and better quests, NPCs and maps. He also likes playing NHL 96, Stonekeep, Heroes Of Might & Magic and Grand Prix 2.

But tonight... Pavel Jost is playing as mass-murderer Tulkas (well, he's killed two players), which, as all well-read PC Zone fans will know, is a name pinched from Tolkien's 'Silmarilions', er, apparently. Asked what quests he had completed, Tulkas replied: "Only underground sea," proving that he's not only mighty with the sword, but a burgeoning comedian (it's a joke about 'SeaQuest DSV' - we think). Tulkas is a member of the Servants of the Light, "We're a peaceful guild, "he tells us, "who take care of our members and use our magic as light against the dark PKers in the beautiful world of Meridian 59." Where's the bucket?

CHRIS ASHLEY



Self-confessed Meridian 59 addict Chris Ashley, a 17-year-old six-former from Telford, in good ol' Blighty, has been playing since June. How addicted is he? 55-hours-a-bloody-weekaddicted, that's how much! "I spend all my spare time on the game," he tells us, "athough I used to do other things like playing football and basketball. I like the way it mirrors real life." But he has some grievances: "I think the game



should have more of a plot," he confessed. Well, we think your life should have more of a plot, Chris!

Whatever, tonight... Chris is Roguston! "I am a neutral character," he tells us. "I kill people that attack me, my friends or my fellow guild members... I have 61 hit points... Weaponcraft Level 5, Qor level 3, Faren level. (Snip - Ed.) Roguston claims to have killed eight players ("because they attacked me"), but is believed to be a merciless murderer with dozens of kills to his name (he's been killed himself seven times). Rog is a member of The Brotherhood of Odin, which he describes as a good guild: "We help each other out. We don't attack people for no reason". Yeah, right.



Revenge is red

Mercifully, very few players talk in Old English (or anything like it). In fact, many of the conversations bear no relation to the game whatsoever. Don't be surprised, for example, to hear Yanks talking about the latest American Football scores and crap TV shows like 'Princess Xena'. This, of course, is where the killing aspect comes in handy. Unfortunately, as I hinted at the top of this review, it's not that straightforward. In order to attack (or, indeed, be attacked by) other players, you need 30 Health Points (HPS). And the only way to raise your HPS to this level (you start with 20) is to spend hours killing dozens (and we mean, dozens) of weak monsters and enlisting the help of others in order to survive (survival is very difficult at first).

In other words, if you want instant gratification, this is definitely not the game for you.

What's more, if you do get to kill an innocent player (ie. someone who hasn't killed another innocent), and become a people killer (PKET), it'll be obvious to all

around as the name above your head turns from white to red. Not only will you be chased by a Revenant (the angry spirit of the character you killed), you'll also draw the attention of guilds – groups of players who typically band together with the sole aim of policing Meridian.

Sure, life as a virtual murderer can be exhilarating, but it's also ruddy dangerous. And dying isn't fun – you're thrown into the Underworld (from where you re-join the game), losing all your possessions and some of your attributes along the way.

Life's a lag and then you die

While the game engine is more complex than you might expect (well, you can look up and down), the graphics and animation are nothing to e-mail home about. Small wonder the adverts for the game don't feature a single screen-shot – there's not even any blood, for heaven's sake.

The other major gripe is lag. It appears minimal at first (the game engine itself runs from hard disk, so



(Left & above) Run errands for old men like this, or kill everyone in sight – it's your choice, people.

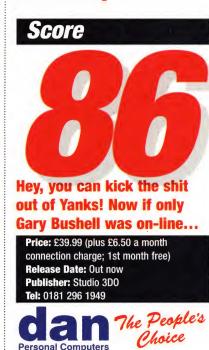
movement is always smooth), but the plotted movement of other players, monsters and so on, can be very erratic. Really slow updates (thankfully not that common) can result in 'lag death' – something or someone could be hitting you, but if the data doesn't get through for a few seconds, you might not even realise until it's too late. Not good.

The real sticking point, of course, is the monthly charge. £6.50 is not that much, but if you're gonna pay money each month, you want to be pretty sure you're gonna play it. While many seem to like the game as it is (some are undoubtedly addicted as our player profiles show), Meridian 59's long-term future – especially in light of the impending competition, notably Ultima On-line – will depend on how far 3DO expand the world and add new quests and features (we'll keep you posted in this On-line section).

Still, you get one month free when you buy the game – long enough to decide if you want to subscribe – and to my mind, it's definitely worth a look, if only for the novelty factor. If you get seriously into the game, just remember one thing: mystic swords might hurt, but your next phone bill will probably hurt much more. Z

(Below) You're supposed to give yourself a sad name, but Robin Hood? That's a bit too sad. isn't it?







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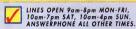
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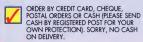
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TROUBLESHOUTER

A fine line separates genius from madness, and there's no doubt on which side The Boggit stands. Two hotdogs short of a barbecue, he's back, dispensing wisdom, and baying at the moon.

Write to PC Zone

If you have a query concerning a role-playing game or adventure, or you have a hot tip or a cheat to share, then write to:

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Just ring this number and ask for all the latest tips, cheats, hacks, cracks, solutions and spoils for all the latest games. This is not an answering machine. This is not a premium line number. A real person on the other end of the line will be happy to oblige you.

READ THIS!

Because our tips line is so busy, and because the man who answers the phone is only a mere mortal, we need you to prove that you have actually bought the magazine and that you're not just a freeloading blagger. To do this, our tips geezer will ask you for a password before you request your tip. This month's password is... "I can't believe it's not Buddha!"

THE TRUE Boggit's Mailbag

Eve of the Beholder II

I'm stuck on the first level upstairs in the Temple. I'm in a square room with no way out, and in the centre of the floor is a soft patch of earth.

I know that to get out of the room I have to plant a pod in the earth and this turns into a teleporter which I must enter to escape. The trouble is, I can't find this pod anywhere and I'm completely stuck.

Paul Anderson, Manchester.

Well, you're almost right. The final exit from this room is through a teleporter, but first you must open a secret passage which leads to the pod you seek. To open that passage you must place the blue, green and red gems into the north wall niche which contains the copper key.

Day of the Tentacle

How do I get the squeaky toy off the cat in Ned & Jed Edison's bedroom – assuming that I need to get the cat/skunk off the roof in the future? I seem to have picked up everything that can be picked up.

Help, please, I don't want to have to listen to the fat slob belch any more than I have to.

Judy Pearson, Sheffield.

I'll bet you're not married yet. The fact that you aren't used to listening to a fat slob belch and snore betrays your innocence.

The trick involves swapping mattresses, then using the squeaky mattress to distract the cat while you run over and grab the squeaky toy. Somehow I get the feeling that





all of your future is foretold in this game. Maybe those knickers the gypsies sold me are beginning to work.

Leisure Suit Larry 3

I'm completely stuck and don't know what to do next. I have a towel, soap on a rope, a sharp knife, and some flowers made into a lei. I've seen the show, and there is a woman in the casino showroom.

Kevin Lubbock, West Yorkshire.

You obviously haven't found the rude wood yet. Lying on the floor of the first jungle scene there is a piece of granadilla wood which can be picked up, then carved by the knife into a exotic wooden artefact. This 'interestingly' shaped curio can be sold to the lady on the beach. If you're lucky, she'll also give you something else to put a smile on your face. Before you go bonking mad, return to your house and take a look inside the mail box, for there you'll find something useful.

Gabriel Knight

I am stuck on Day 4 of this game. I need to convince Mosley to re-open the case, but I cannot find any evidence of the cult or a lead to them. I have a lot of objects, including a copy of the tattoo and the complete pattern, but I don't know where to get the symbols from the tomb translated.

Please, help me. If you do, I'll take a subscription out soon.

Gareth Hughes, Chester.

Define 'soon'. Would that be 'today' soon, or 'next year' soon? I don't see how I can be kept in beer and pork scratchings unless you lot come up with the folding paper stuff. As you've supplied me with your name and address I've taken the liberty of sending it directly to the office and told them that you wish to take out five deluxe subscriptions (one for your poor old mum). Incidentally, the deluxe edition is the one where the demos on the CD actually work!

You should ask Grace to research the pattern. Ring Wolfgang on 49-09-324-3333 and he'll tell you he's sending you his journal. Read today's newspaper in the shop.

(Top right) Leisure Suit Larry 7. (Right) Day of the Tentacle.

TROUBLESHOOTER

D Y/O

Go to Napoleon House to get the snake bracelet. Go to Jackson Square Overlook and watch through binoculars to see Crash meeting with the Drummer. Follow Crash to the Cathedral. Show the bracelet to Crash and ask about Drummer and Voodoo Hounfour. Make a copy of Crash's tattoo in the sketch book. Return to the bookshop to end Day 4.

Shadow of the Comet

This game has got me stumped. I have discovered the message on Lord Boleskine's rifle, but I don't know what it means. I also need to find someone or something that can tell me the location of the cross in the forest. Please tell me what I need to know.

Kevin Hanson, Metheringham.

I haven't seen many messages on rifles, although I did see one in Ireland which had a notice on the barrel saying, "Point this end away from you." Admittedly this message was written in tiny writing (probably only visible to leprechauns) and you either needed superhuman powers or a magnifying glass to read it. If, unlike me, you have no superhuman powers, I suggest you find the magnifying glass which is to be found in a cabinet. My old memory is a bit dim as to exactly where that is, but I believe it's in the Town Hall. As for the location of the cross, you're going to need to clean up a certain drawing with a piece of cotton wool and some surgical spirits to find the answer you are looking for.

Space Quest IV

When I come out of the sewers I watch these guys come out of their ship and disperse into the streets. After that I can't go anywhere or do anything, or even play with myself.

David Rennie, Suffolk.

Don't knock playing with yourself, at least you're having fun with someone who really loves you. The answer isn't too difficult. When you leave the sewer you will be near the battledroid, go right as quickly as possible and climb into the patrol craft. The craft will lift off and take you to the Police Headquarters.

Buried in Time

I'm stuck in an old missile site. I've found the Transport Code, but when I input it into the transporter it asks for a three-digit, alien prefix code which I don't know.

M. Davies, Scunthorpe.

I had to search the box of scrolls from under my bed for this one. (Incidentally, if it's true that when we are born we come from dust and when we die we return to dust, then there is definitely someone under my bed who is either coming or going.)

The scroll says, "Culprit's Lair – Examine the Bulletin Board with the post-it on it. Review the news stories on the INN screen in the centre of the board. Page the text section and find the three-digit alien code."

I've never played the game, but it sounds a hoot to me. Not.



(Far right) Worms. (Right) Descent II.

Are you suffering from terminal anxiety? Are you pissed off being thrashed by a load of brainless pixels? Well. don't just sit there moaning and beating your joystick. Get Mad! Get **Even! Get** Cheating!



Sensible World of Soccer

If you want to make all of your players worth £17 million, here's what to do.

Using a hex editor, find the player you want to turn into a superman by editing the appropriate file. TEAM.020 is the Italian League and TEAM.008 is the English League. You can, of course, simply edit your save game file (which will be in the form of *.CAR) in the swos folder.

Twenty three characters after the player's name there will be some lines of data, e.g. STEVE BOULD 60 00 03 3F E3 33 1C 00 00 00 00 00 08.

The first and second values are the player's position and colour.

player's position and col
20 Right Back
40 Left Back
60 Centre Back
80 Right Wing
A0 Left Wing
C0 Centre Midfield
E0 Striker

Add the following values to the value for position to change the appearance:

oo black hair, white face o8 ginger hair, white face to black hair, black face

The 6th to 14th, and the 26th characters are the player's ratings. To create great players change them to ** oo of FF FF FF 7F 00 00 00 00 00 03 0. (Where ** is the player's position and colour.)

To make Steve Bould a brilliant striker, change his code to:
E0 00 07 FF FF FF 7F 00 00 00 00 30.
(Submitted by David North, Ashford)

Descent II

LPNLIZARD

Here are some cool cheats for *Descent II* that work really well!

GABBAGABBAHEY Reduce shield and energy to one.

SPANIARD Toasts all robots in the

mine.
ALMIGHTY Invulnerability.

GODZILLA Kills bots when your ship contactS them.

ALIFALAFEL Accessories!

(Headlights, afterburner etc.) GOWINGNUT Guide robot gets

angry. Fires missiles at robots.

All weapons home in on enemy.

FREESPACE Warp to selected level.
ROCKRGRL Full Map.

LPVISHNU Buddy bot cheat.

DELSHIFTB Finish level.



ORALGROOVE Gives Key Cards.

DUDDAB00 Bouncing Weapons.

HONESTBOB Super Wowie Weapons.

(Submitted by Stephen Rice, Portishead)

Worms Again

If you're still wriggling at the bottom of the garden, here are yet more interesting facts concerning worms.

When it is your turn to play, type the cheat code BAABAA which will give you all of the cool weapons. Before your turn finally ends, type the code AABAAB and this will let you carry on with the same worm indefinitely.

(Submitted by Adrian Gibbons.)

Stonekeep

Stonekeep was to have been the mother of all dungeon killers, but it never quite seemed to cut the mustard. You can make things a little easier by using this handy gnome-nobbling trick.

When set upon by a bad guy, simply hold down either the left or right cursor to make your hero spin around furiously while at the same time thrashing out with a weapon. You'll find that you'll be able to hit them, but they won't be able to hit you.

Ultima VII Part 1

This is another mysterious hint which seems too good to be true. So don't blame me if it's just a wind-up!

According to whispered legend, there is a secret location called the Room of Ultimate Solutions. In this room is stored almost every object hidden in the game. To find it go to the blacksmith's shop in the north-west part of Trinsic. Pile wooden boxes on top of each other to form a ramp up to the shop's roof. Go up the ramp to the eastern edge of the roof on the far side of the chimney. Walk inside the chimney to find all of the game's secrets.

Ultima Underworld II

Use the spell vas ort ylem to add magic capabilities to your equipment and weapons.

Settlers 2

If you think you really are too good for this game, perhaps you would appreciate a couple of go-faster stripes to get things moving along. Here's a handy hint to increase the speed of the game.

Type THUNDER and after that you can use ALT-1 to ALT-6 to alter the speed of things from one to six times normal.



THE GAME GURU THE GAME GURU S



Approximately a quarter of a century ago William Clow aka The Game Guru, plugged a prototype of Atari Pong™ into an old black and white TV. He systematically set about defeating the 2k machine. It took him just 96 minutes.

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ON IT. HIS OPINION IS SOUGHT BY
SOFTWARE MANUFACTURERS FROM
SILICON VALLEY TO TOKYO. STUDIO
3DO RECORDED THIS EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW WHEN THEY CAUGHT
UP WITH HIM AT HIS HOME IN
GREENWICH VILLAGE, NEW YORK.

Studio 3DO: Why do you keep doves?

There's a theory in psychology called Cognitive Dissonance. It's about the way people strive for balance in their life. My life is centred around defeating machines or other players. I seek conflict. Doves represent peace, they bring balance to my life.

Studio 3DO: Is defeating a game more important than playing it, surely it's the taking part?

Whoever said that never won. Winning is the purpose of gaming. Machines don't understand the concept of 'playing' – that is a human flaw, machines are designed to succeed. To beat a machine you only have to think like a machine.

Studio 3DO: When did you start gaming?

**Way back in the fifties when the first Pin Ball machines showed up. I travelled from state to state rackin' up high scores all over America. That was when I played by the rules – I was young and stupid.

Studio 3DO: Does that mean you break the rules now?

The world is ruled by deeds, not by good intentions, and one efficient sinner is worth ten futile saints and martyrs.

Studio 3DO: So you do cheat?

: The whole secret of successful fighting is to get your enemy at a disadvantage. Never, on any

account, fight him on equal terms. If a game can be hacked it will be hacked. It is no more cheating than practice, but those who practice cheat themselves. I have beaten over 100 of the top PC titles. Hacking a programme is an art form in itself. It is the sport of winners and should be respected as such.

Studio 3DO: Will there ever be a game you cannot defeat?

All the armed prophets conquer, all the unarmed ones perish. People will always dream up new, and so called harder games to defeat, but it's of little consequence. Sonic™ I deemed simplistic, Duke Nukem 3D™ amused me, and Quake™ entertained me for a matter of minutes. Some people are good at throwing a ball, others know how to write a tune. Myself, I just know how to win.

THE GAME GURU'S SECRETS AND CHEATS ARE AVAILABLE ON DISK FROM ALL LEADING GAMES STORES





Azrael's Fear



Next to the "Perfect Pint" and the "Perfect Pub" to drink it in, the "Holy Grail" has to be the greatest guest that any adventurer can pursue. Casting aside all unworthy thoughts of real ale and hedgehog-flavoured crisps, this month the and joined the Crusades

HERE IS MORE THAN ONE WAY TO skin a cat (don't ask what they are or I'll be sick) and likewise there are many ways to complete Azrael's Tear. This walkthrough will show you one of them, but en passant (isn't a private education marvellous?), we'll mention alternative options.

You'll no doubt already be aware that this game believes in instant death for any small transgression, so do us both a favour and save your game every few moves. There are many pages of ancient manuscripts scattered around the temple and these can be picked up and read, but other than being useful for wrapping chips, they don't appear to have any effect on the game's outcome.

Into the Temple

end of the Mine Head

Room are the two grilles which lie

beneath the Crusher

and Saw machines.

the correct stone

block on the

Saw machine

Use the crane to place

Begin by picking up the page in the corridor, then go south to the Wash Room. Move the mirror to direct the light onto the mouldy panel by the

door marked x, then quickly return to the entry passage until the gas clears. Return to the x door and fall into the mine. Shoot Lincoln, then pick up the bullets, the piece of tapestry and the elephant gun. Note the location of the locked chest. Find and speak

go to the next passage and pull the rope to release the ramp. Go up the ramp and find the Mine Head Room. Talk with Lurka, then release him by moving the rail nearby. Go through the door to the Spa Room and turn the stop cock. You'll need to rotate it twice to direct the power to the Saw instead of the Crusher machine in the Mine Head Room, Return to Mine Head and look at the stone blocks until you find the one with the key inside. Climb the ramp and pick up the tongs at the top. Look north to see the Crusher and Saw machines above the grilles. Operate the crane to pick up the correct stone block and move it onto the Saw platform. Go to the door of the Spa Room and operate the Saw control to split open the block and drop the key through the grille. Collect the key.

The Shields

The main puzzles revolve around finding four shields. When you find them, they are each placed in special holes beneath the revolving machinery in the Orrery Room. To make things a hidden within it - two of the Shield1 is no need to collect all six shields, but



TROUBLESHOOTER





through the broken mirror into the identical room beyond. Climb the stairs and pick up the three pieces of tapestry. Rotate the screen with the tapestry on it to read a clue. Place each of the other four pieces in your possession on the empty slots. The pieces must be assembled in the correct order to create a picture. Go to the bath of mucky water and look at the diagram above it which shows how to connect the pipes in the Well Room which will drain the bath. Go to the Mine Head Room, then through to the green-coloured Well Room next door. Use the control panel to arrange the pipes as shown in the Baptistery. (You'll hear rushing water when you get it right.) Return to the bath of mucky water and retrieve a glass lens from inside. Use the lens with





the stone bible in the centre of the room. Stand on the pressure pad before the font and use the lens to view a movie. A secret door will now open to reveal the first of the Shield1 types.

Alternative Shield1

Return to the Mine Head Room and into the green Well Room. Use the tongs to pick up the key from inside the well. Go to the mine and use the key to open the locked chest and get the amulet it contains. Return to the door marked x and use the block key to open the panel and obtain a Shield1.

Orrery

In the wall alcove is a console which when examined reveals a puzzle. The rings can be rotated and the top left button moves the ball. Get the ball into the centre of the rings. Go to the room nearby with the caged monster, and press the lever on the outside of the north column. The spears will collapse and kill the monster, allowing you to enter the ring and press the lever on the inside of the north column. This action will reassemble the apparatus back in the Orrery Room. Return to the Orrery Room, pick up the page beneath the rotating mechanism. Place Shield1 in the hole in the floor to unlock the door nearby. Go through the door, pick up the pages in the corridor, then follow the corridor into the Chapel.

Chapel

Go to the sw corner near the altar and pick up the page resting on the organ keyboard. Go to the NE corner and enter the Confession Booth to view a movie of Tobias and Lurka.

(Above) If you've got the guts, and the right mixture, you'll be able to find something useful between the dead alchemist's legs.

(Below left) A scary monster patrols the waters of the underground dock, but like all monsters, it's terrified of warm baths.

(Bottom left) Brass plaques show the pumping connections which must be made in the Well Room to solve a nearby puzzle.

(Below) With the chest from the ship's hold successfully raised onto the min-cart, you're well on your way to finishing your first task. What a pity it's all a red-herring.

Leave the chapel by the side door to enter the Vestry and meet Philip. Go through to the Cloister and down the ladder. At this point you will meet Tallum, who, if you are quick, can be killed with the elephant gun, otherwise you'll end up in the Library with Tobias.

Library

In the Library you can go behind the red curtains and look through the spy glass. By rotating the nearby mirror you can view up to three scenes. Take the book off the table and find the key hidden beneath it. This key opens a grille in the Drain. Listen at the listening tubes.

Leave Library and go down the trapdoor next door. Travel through to find Edgar's Court. Note that just outside the room is a small alcove holding the first of the two Shield2 types. There is a winch next to it which requires a winch handle to open it. (This handle is hidden in a barrel on the large ship in the Dock.)

Agree to help Edgar, then when he leaves, open the seats and take all you find there with you.

Return to the Vestry where you met Philip and use the key from Edgar's Court to open the barred gate. Go down the stairs and through the locked grille using the Library Key to find the Ladder up to the Dock.

The Dock

Towards the northern end of the dock is another well, with a ladder down to the Sluice Room. Halfway along the dock, next to the viaduct, there is a lever on the wall. The viaduct supports a small railway track which joins the Mine Head Room to a large ship at the other side of the dock. Next to the lever is a fissure which leads down to the Interview Room. At the southern end of the dock is a fissure in the wall which leads down steps to a small boat.

Begin by moving the lever to open the double doors above which lead out of the Mine Head Room. Go through the wall fissure to find Kurt. Talk with Kurt and let the raptor kill him. Enter Kurt's room and open the box to find another page. Return to the Mine Head Room





(4) and sit in the railway cart. Use the controls to close the side doors then ride the machine across the gap to the ship in the Dock.

Enter the ship, then go down into the hold and find the bottle of *aqua fortis* which sits amongst the casks and barrels. In the barrel is a winch handle which opens the Shield2 alcove next to Edgar's Court. (There is a small chest you can stand on to reach into the barrel.)

Return to the deck and use the controls to pick up the chest and place it next to the cart.

The middle lever in the cart will no longer operate because of rust, but a quick splash of *aqua fortis* will free it. Use the cart to haul the chest back to the Mine Head Room where Edgar will be waiting. Use the winch to place the chest in the Saw machine. Edgar is going to kill you at this point no matter what you do, so don't mess with the bastard – just shoot him! Unfortunately, there is nothing in the chest, but you can saw it open and prove it if you want to be utterly pedantic.

The Dock Monster

A large scaly beast called Sasha lives in the Dock and it's time we got rid of her, for now we need to cross the Dock in the small boat, and she won't take kindly to that. There are various ways of dealing the beast, but here is the easiest one. Go to the ladder at the dockside which leads down to the Sluice Room. Go down the ladder to a ledge where you can see a large door secured with a bolt, next to which is a pipe with a stop cock. Open the door and let the water rush in. After a few minutes the roar will subside and you'll see Sasha arrive. Turn the stop cock to let hot water enter and this will enrage Sasha so much that she will leave the whole dock area, never to return.

The Boat

Make your way to the small boat moored at the Dock steps. Above the stairway there is a diagram showing the pipe connections you could make in the Well Room to get hot water to this spot. (Above) Look into the There is no need to do this if you've pool of water beneath already scared Sasha away. When you the pipes in the Well enter the boat you'll find a hose which Room and you'll could be connected to the transom. discover something to Again, this action is not required as it your advantage. simply pumps hot water around the (Below left) Above the boat to keep the monster away. Use the bath in the Baptistery is winch to move the boat across the Dock. the engraving which



Room to drain the bath

of the mucky water.

With the sludge gone

(Bottom right) No, it's

jukebox, nor is it an

early Space Invaders

solve the puzzle of the

computer game in the

which lies around you

will be well on its way

Orrery Room, the pile of

console. If you can

tangled machinery

to being fixed.

you'll gain a prize.

not a Dark Ages

Philip waits to talk to you inside the Lab. Once he has gone, pick up the chemicals and read the book. Between the legs of the corpse on the floor lies a pool of acid containing a bunch of keys. You must now mix a concoction to neutralise the acid. Place the flask in the holder of the metal teapot, then into the mixer you must place moon+blood+aqua fortis. Use this flask of mixture on the keys to neutralise the acid, then pick them up. On the floor, half-hidden behind the metal teapot, is the second of the two Shield2 types. Use the aqua fortis to release it from the mortar which holds it.

Use the keys to open the door next to the metal teapot and enter the Attack Corridor.

The Attack Corridor

No matter how you play it now – you're in for a beating. The corridor leads via a spiral staircase to the Chapel, but for the moment the only place you are going is the Gibbet Room.

Gibbet Room

If you are lucky, you'll awaken, bruised and bloody, in the Gibbet Room. Save the game, then choose your comments to Jack carefully. Make the correct choices and he'll set you free and lead

you to the Sanctuary. Once you are free to leave, search the nearby corridors to find Lurka's room which contains the pianola roll, plaque and wax.

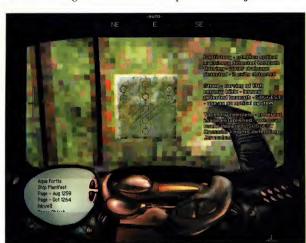
Make your way back to the Orrery and place Shield2 in the hole in the floor, which removes iron bars blocking the passageway under the altar in the Chapel. Return to the Chapel and view a new movie in the Confessional. Place the pianola roll in the slot in the pillar next to the organ. And this will open the secret passageway through the altar.

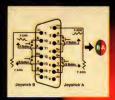
In next month's final instalment:
Will the Taskmasters succeed in
overcoming the zombies of the Lower
Depths? Will they find the Holy Grail? And
if they do, what will they fill it with? You
all come back now, y'hear. Z











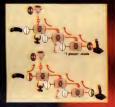
hough most PCs ha deisgn actually suppo Advanced sticks that st and ruddor controls of the second joystick (B) are connected only two



activated at the same time for two-play games. However, due to the design of the joystick port, the advanced functions of



Select single player mode and the AlfaTwin allows you to switch between two joysticks. In this mode, all the functions of the stick are supported. To select your stick, simply press the fire button of the controller you wish to use.



onnected simultaneously. Moreover, the the AlfaTwin round to the front of your he hassle of plugging/unplugging your

FORMAT

PC FORMAT MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 1996 ISSUE

Leading joystick manufacturer says: International Press comment on AlfaTwin:

"Just to let you know that the AlfaTwin Joystick-switch arrived intact.
At this moment I have connected 7 (!) joysticks to the AlfaTwin :-) and it works perfectly.

Gravis Phoenix

Computer - - - AlfaTwin Gravis GrIP

"This all works without having to pull out all the cables, einfach wunderbar! I cannot say anything else except congratulations with a very nice product."

Edu Oskam , Technical Support Specialist
(Gravis Europe/Holland)

England PC Format

4) 18

This is an auto-switch and two-player adapter for any two 15-pin controllers... In auto-switch mode all the advanced controlls, such as hats, are available. It costs less than 20 pounds." (Gold-award, September 1996)

CD ROM Today There is no need to install drivers or fiddle around inside your machine - it almost too simple...AlfaTwin does its

job and adds a whole new dimenesion to gaming. Very useful...' (Best Buy, June 1995)

Patent Pending

PC Review

"As well as helping you enjoy unbridled twop player action you can plus in two different styles of joystick and cunningly flip between them (September 1996.)

Germany
PC-Player
"One of the most annoying problems of the
PG is finally solved... the 40 Mark device
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live without it after only a few minutes of use." (July 1996)

"An intelligent joystick-adapter for two players...outstanding useability, a very good price-performance ratio" (August 1996)

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PC-Speil

"The new magic word for two-player games is Alfa twin' (June 1996)

Japan DOS/V

"For the PC, to become a popular game hardware... it is also indespensable to be played with two players. It is no fun to play with pad vs keyboard. Now we can use AlfaTwin... (March 1996)

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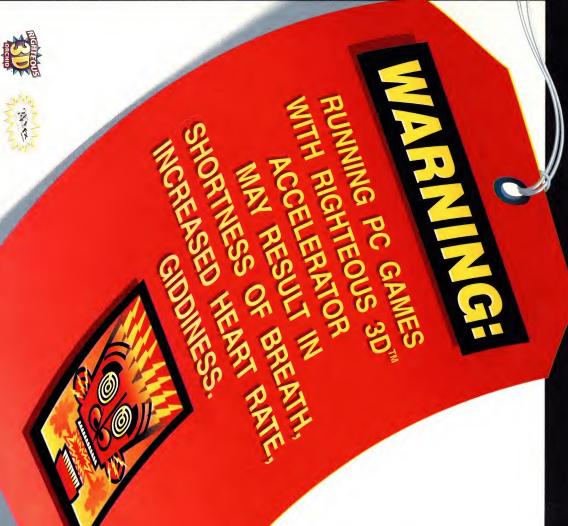
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Subdivided by genre

ACTION

SOLUTE ZERO 70

Domark, £39.99

Sub-standard Wing Commander clone which needs loads of HD space.

ALADDIN 70 Virgin, £29.99

Pointy-slippered platform action. Substandard Prince Of Persia.



Good graphics, frenzied shoot 'em up action. Addictive stuff.

ASSAULT RIGS 78

Psygnosis, £34.99

PSX-converted platform game in a tank. With network options.

BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN 83 FunSoft, £34.99

Pretty good PlayStation conversion of a good-looking beat 'em up which runs well without a 3D accelerator card. The gameplay itself is a bit too fireball-orientated, with bouts that resemble a sword and sorcery special effects movie rather than a good old meeting of fists and feet. But if you must have it...

R50 PD57

US Gold, £19.99

Add-on disk for X-Wing with hot (ugly) ship.



CANNON FODDER 90

C Virgin Interactive, £24.99

Great fun. Action-orientated forerunner to the likes of Command & Conquer and Z.





HAOS ENGINE 80

Multi-directional scrolling, top-down, manic shoot 'em up action they just don't make them like that any more.

IE PATROL (& GAME GUN) 70

American Laser Games/Mirage, £39.99

Shoot 'em up with bundled lightgun which is compatible with some other titles, making it pretty good value.



RUSADER 91

Origin/Electronic Arts, £49.99 Action, adventure, problem-solving, strategy and people getting their heads blown off all rolled into one in this isometric-viewed

futuristic shoot 'em up. Little Big Adventure with guns.



CYBERBYKES 10 Gametek, £24.99

One of the games which helped build the reputation Gametek now enjoy.



CYBERIA 80

R Interplay, £49.99

Walk about for a bit in good-looking backgrounds, making decisions or solving puzzles which determine whether you live or die, then do the shoot 'em up bit. And so on, until you finish it. Only for the patient.

R25 PD23



CYBERIA 2 80 R Interplay, £44.95

If you liked the first game, you'll like this. Your quest (just for a change) is to save the world via the usual mix of arcade shooty bits and crap 'adventure' bits.



CYCLEMANIA 83

Accolade, £39.99 Road Rash-wannabe. It was okay when it came out but Road Rash 95 (recently reviewed) is much better.

REC PDEC

DARK FORCES 95

LucasArts/Virgin, £54.99

Wonderfully atmospheric Doom-isation of Star Wars that many people preferred to Doom itself. Great graphics, tricky puzzles, true 3D levels and stirring tunes and you get to shoot the heads off of Imperial Stormtroopers.

R24 PD25, 29 T27



Interplay, £44.99

First version of the sick-making whirly, spinny-roundy, 3D shoot 'em up.

R25 PD25, 28, LE29 T26,



Hardened Descenders will find enough to test them, but there's a learning curve for newcomers too. New weapons, monsters and great sound effects, plus 'Capture the Flag' team games. Great stuff.

R37 PD37 T51







R = reviewed (issue number)

PD = playable demo on cover (Issue number)

RD = rolling demo on cover disk (Issue number)

LE = level editor

T = tips or solution (Issue number)

Gremlin, £34.99

Ropey conversion of Megadrive's strategic helicopter shoot 'em up.





Surely we don't need to tell you about this one. If you're still after levels for it though. we had 130 on Issue 17's cover disk, 500+ on Issue 21's, and about the same on Issue 25's. And it's free on Issue 28's. See also Ultimate Doom, below.

R13, PD28, LE15 T12, 19



Virgin Interactive, £49.99 Expensive sequel with new weapons and new monsters. Loadsa levels for it on Issue 25's cover disk. See also Ultimate Doom.

DUKE NUKEM 3D 93 US Gold, £44.99

A Doom-clone that actually manages to be more inventive and entertaining than the original. Full registered version has some cool new weapons and nastier enemies, a level designer, and the facility to convert

Doom-WADs into Duke maps. It's funny, too. RAO PDA1 T38, 39 42

EXTREME GAMES 70

Psygnosis, £29.99

PSX-converted trendy-sports combat racing game that plods even on a P133.



FADE TO BLACK 94 Electronic Arts, £44.99

The follow-up to Flashback, with outstanding graphics, fancy spinny-aroundy polygon bits, and a level of difficulty that's up there with licking your own anus. Has all the elements of the original including morphing security androids and white plimsolls and more.

INAL DOOM 62

GT Interactive, £44.95

Last attempt to wring yet more money from any suckers who haven't heard of Duke Nukem 3D or Quake. The levels are quite good, it sports hi-res and Internet play, and it runs under Windows 95.

HAWK 2 60

Core Design, £39.99

Below-par helicopter shoot 'em up with popup mountains.



US Gold, £9.99

Beautifully animated platform game with the nightmarishly hard foes and treacherous traps that will do to your tads what a

Spanish chef does for a bull's. Varied locations including a killing gameshow but it isn't easy and the complicated controls only work well with a gamepad.



One of the best 3D beat 'em ups on the PC. Loads of moves, atmospheric graphics and fighters ranging from snappy-limbed insects through pneumatic-breasted women/cat hybrids to giant turd monsters. Cool.

R29 PD30 T31, 32

HERETIC 78

iD/Raven, £39.99 Doom in tights.

R25 PD24 T26



C HEXEN 94 iD, £39.99

One stage up from Doom in terms of gameplay, it's essentially a simplified RPG with a less linear approach and an improved game engine that lets you look up and down. Great-looking, extremely involving, with an eight-player deathmatch facility.

And very, very hard.

THE HIVE 78

Funsoft UK, £39.99

Pre-rendered shoot 'em up. Rebel Assault without the good bits.

R35 PD35



IMPERIAL PURSUIT 80 LucasArts, £19.99

X-Wing add-on: long, involving, 'story-driven' tour of duty.

R7 TE



Ocean, £44.99 Slick space combat thingy that branches out into sub-aqua combat thingy and even planet surface hovery combat thingy. Cutscenes, reasonable graphics, fine explosions, booming SFX and pilot aids galore.

R20 PD25

IGLE STRIKE 79

Gremlin, £39,99

Follow up to Desert Strike, with more trees.

R26 PD25



lt's not a game as such, but a game designer for Windows that lets you make the sort of sick, unpleasant action fests that you've always wanted. Neat, intuitive and fun.

THE LION KING 71

Virgin, £29.99

Platform games follow Disney films as surely as dogs follow bitches in heat.

R23 PD24 T49



AGIC CARPET 96

Electronic Arts, £44.99

Very good mana-based shoot 'em up that's very hard and gets a bit repetitive after a while, but looksfantastic

R21 PD22 T26, 39



CARPET 2 92 Electronic Arts, £44.99

Improved version of the first game with new monsters and scary night-time bits. Also comes with a good on-line help mode, and it's a little easier than the original.

R32 PD31 T42



MAGIC CARPET: HIDDEN WORLDS 80 R MAGIC GARRES. ... Builfrog, £19.99

Add-on levels for Magic Carpet, but beware: it's utterly, stupidly, nut-crushingly hard.



Rarely has stomping around the countryside in a 70-foot armour-plated monster robot, blowing the shit out of anything you take a dislike to and generally running amok been so rewarding, so spiritual, so... healing.

RS9 PDS9 TS4 36 41



METALTECH: EARTHSIEGE 87 Sierra, £39.99

More stomping about in gigantic descendants of vacuum cleaners, except the landscape's totally flat and the opponents rather too hard in the campaign mode.

R25 PD23

C METALTECH: EARTHSIEGE 2 90 Sierra, £44.99

Equally hard campaign mode, but here the graphics are excellent, the terrain varied and the sound effects stepped up. Which makes it just about the best giant robot game around. Windows 95 only.

R38 PD39



GT Interactive, £44.99 ORTAL KOMBAT 3 90

The latest version of the much-hyped 'gorefest', complete with ludicrous cartoon-style blood spatters, fatality, babe-ality and 'friendship' finishing moves if you can work out the multiple button presses. An excellent two-dimensional beat 'em up.



THE MUPPET CD-ROM 87 Starwave/Ocean, £39.99

Hilarious outing featuring all your favourite sock-based characters in seven average(ish) arcade/puzzle games which sparkles with Muppet humour. Superb intro sequence.



C NIHILIST 91 Philips, £39.99

Good-looking shoot 'em up that's basically a first-person viewed Asteroids. Loads of variety, with mayhem, retro wire-frame and bizarro pool table levels, and even a bonus sub-game of Asteroids itself. Add to this a wide range of network options, a PWEI/Dog Eat Dog soundtrack and an in-game option to play your own CDs, and you have a minor corker.

R43

BALL WORLD 77

21st Century Entertainment, £44.99

Make your way round the world via pinball tables. Or not.

RALL DREAMS 70

21st Century Entertainment, £39.99

Eight tables with lots of rendered garbage thrown in. Well, it is on CD-ROM after all...

PITFALL: THE MAYAN ADVENTURE 70

Activision, £44.99

Ancient Atari VCS platform game conversion. Try to stay calm.

PRAY FOR DEATH 70

Virgin Interactive, £44.95

Sub-standard beat 'em up. Pray for something else instead.



R PRIMAL RAGE 82 Time Warner Interactive, £39.99

Dinosaur-based beat 'em up in the sidewayson viewed Streetfighter mould (except you get to use your teeth more). Good graphics, good gameplay: Jurassic Park for psychopaths.

R32 PD31



PRINCE OF PERSIA 2 89 Broderbund, £12.99

Nice-looking platform game with pointy shoes and pyjamas.

PRIVATEER 75

Origin, £11.99

Wing Commander-style dogfighting, Elitestyle trading.



WATEER 2: THE DARKENING 94 Electronic Arts, £39.99

The follow-up to Privateer finally gets some decent, fast and furious interstellar combat à la X-Wing. It also gets greatly improved graphics. Add top stars, five million bucks' worth of studio-based acting and an engrossing plot well told and you have the best space combat game ever.



PRO PINBALL: THE WEB 9 Empire Interactive, £34.99

Extremely realistic and gorgeous-looking game with a stonking soundtrack. There's only one table, but it's feature-packed you can even nudge it from each side and the bottom. The best pinball experience you can get, short of buying a real Williams table

PSYCHO PINBALL 78

Codemasters, £44,99

Okay-looking and sounding lightweight pinball game.

R27 PD23

PYROTECHI

Psygnosis, £29.99

Descent wannabe. Proof that just wanting something isn't enough.

R27 PD26



AKE 96 iD Software/GT Interactive, £39.99

Ouake?... Quake... Nope, it's gone. I can't really remember what this somewhat obscure little number's all about. But apparently it's quite good.

R43 T43



Sort of like Doom on wheels. It's not brilliant, but it's good fun for a quick blast.

R22 PD19 T30, 37

Ubisoft, £39.99

Irritating, unoriginal PSX-converted platform game.



C REBEL ASSAULT 2 90 LucasArts/VIE, £49.99

Gorgeous graphics, good solid gameplay and 'real' live action footage combine to make another thoroughly enjoyable, pre-rendered shoot 'em up experience for Star Wars fans. It even has a corker of a storyline.

R34 PD17, 29, 37

RRECTION: RISE 2 73

Acclaim/Mirage, £44.99

Nicks some ideas from other beat 'em ups and again looks nice, but still falls short.



Side-on beat 'em up of limited moves (and no ability to turn round) that looked nice, but was too generously marked.



RISE OF THE TRIAD 82 US Gold, £12.99

One of the better Doom-alikes, but nowadays that's a bit like being one of the better Pong machine-alikes.

R26 PD26 T26



ROAD RASH 95 84 Electronic Arts, £34.99

The motorbike-based beat 'em up finally makes it to the PC in Win95 form and turns out to be surprisingly good. It's hardly original in concept, but it's well put together and a good laugh. And it's got a link-up mode to bludgeon your friends.

ROAD WARRIOR 61 Gametek, £39.99

Crappy sequel to Quarantine that's no better than the original.



First-person viewed shoot 'em up that has you piloting a morphable hovery jet-cum tank thing through eight levels, subdivided into three stages each. Intuitive controls, lightning-fast gameplay (at least in lo-res) and nasty little enemies combine to make it one of the more action-packed and enjoyable blasters around.



SLIPSTREAM 5000 88

Gremlin Interactive, £9.99 (Budget) Hovery racing game that's rather like the much-hyped Wipeout except it runs at a good speed, is very playable with PC controllers, and costs a whole heap less.

R27 T35

S.T.O.R.M. 70

Electronic Arts, £39.99

Scramble-lookalike that's pretty but much too hard.

R77

Velocity/3D0, £39.99 You can talk to people in it. And it uses the old Doom engi zzzzz.



SUPER STREETFIGHTER II TURBO 90 Gametek, £39.99

The best sideways-on viewed beat 'em up on the PC. Slick and fast, it's one of the best arcade conversions around. Chun Li's thighs never looked so large, so solid, so... scary.

R27 PD29



Atari, £29.99

A 15-year-old Atari game gets a techno soundtrack and suddenly words like 'arcade classic' are being bandied around the office.

US Gold, £12.99

The first of Apogee's 3D Realms games. Fly about in an anti-gravity sort of way, shooting everything in sight on the Magic Carpet-like levels; find the exit tunnel, warp to the next level; continue until bored.

R30 PD31 T29, 30



IINATOR: FUTURE SHOCK 85 VIE, £39.99

Shoot 'em up based on the first Terminator film with full freedom of movement in a true 3D world. Look up and down (or die), drive cars, blow the shit out of terminators, robots and flying ships and get lost in the enormous war-torn levels.

R35 PD34 T40



Stomping-about-in-robot-suits, shooting-thecrap-out-of-stuff game from the people behind System Shock. In fact, it plays like System Shock Outdoors, Complex controls and less than stunning sound effects and graphics, but it's enjoyable nonetheless.

R39 PD38



Classy-looking rendered beat/hack/stab/shoot 'em up with nice backgrounds and lots of walking-about bits in which you get whisked to different eras in time to find something that may or may not be some kind of weird computer virus thing. We may never know.



TIE FIGHTER 94 Virgin Interactive, £49.99

Follow-up to X-Wing stuffed with loads of new features and more importantly, the chance to succumb to the Dark Side, dress up in some really cool plastic uniforms and shoot the nuts off that arsehole Luke Skywalker. If that's not overstating things.

R18 PD29 T19, 20 21

TIE FIGHTER: DEFENDER OF THE EMPIRE 73 LucasArts, £19.99

Two new missions and a missile gunboat.



Virgin Interactive, £34.99 Another of the thousands of pinball games available to people with itchy flipper fingers and no loose change. There are six tables to choose from, and a variety of ways to view them, but it doesn't have the depth of gameplay provided by Pro Pinball: The Web.

R55 PD3

CAT ALLEY 34 Sega, £29.99

Fighter jets in FMV land repetitive shite. Another hit for Sega's new PC team.

TOTAL CARNAGE 74

ICE, £24,99 Crappy-looking arcade-style shoot 'em up.

TOTAL MANIA 68

Eidos Interactive/Domark, £39.99 X-COM/Crusader hybrid that looks nice but will bore your arse off.

R-1 PD-1

Team 17, £29.99

Nob-looking sub-standard beat 'em up.

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ULTIMATE DOOM 90

GT Interactive, £29.99

Doom with an extra episode. Buy Issue 30 and get it for free.



VIRTUA FIGHTER REMIX 89 Sega/Datatronic, Evaries bundled with

Diamond Edge graphics card

Sega's arcade hit comes to your PC, thanks to the wonders of the bundled 3D graphics accelerator card, giving you superb visuals with excellent detail on the fighter sprites. But it doesn't quite match Streetfighter 2 Turbo or Mortal Kombat 3 in the playability stakes.

IRTUA FIGHTER PC 79

Sega PC, £29.99

Same game, but doesn't need the accelerator card and markedly slower as a result.





Interesting choice of name for another shite Doom-clone.



WARRIORS Mindscape, £9.99

Frenetic French beat 'em up. It has a Playboy bunny as a hidden character, reasonable graphics and the usual special moves along with some unusual ones, like grenades. And the obligatory (unhidden) sexy chick has a tattoo.

R27 PD27



WILLIAMS ARCADE CLASSICS 90 GT Interactive, £29.99

If you really want to use your million-dollar multimedia Pentium to play conversions of prehistoric arcade games that have all the graphical sophistication of a drawing by Stevie Wonder, then this is probably the compilation for you. Arcade-perfect versions of Defender, Robotron 2084, Stargate Defender 2, Joust, Bubbles and Sinistar.

WING COMMANDER: ARMADA 76 Electronic Arts, £44.99

Cheap attempt to cash in while people waited for WC III.

Electronic Arts, £59.99

Four million dollars' worth of film, linked by the same old crappy space combat.

R23 RD25



DER IV 85 Origin/Electronic Arts, £44.95

The filmed sequences with real sets and proper actors cost over \$8m to make, and it shows. A genuinely absorbing plot with a strong storyline provides the most complete cinematic gaming experience to date. Sadly, the gameplay bit is less impressive and nor it advanced since the last version. You'll also need a seriously meaty PC to run it.



Doom-style hack 'em up. No firing spells from a safe distance here; it's hand-to-hand combat all the way. Midway between Heretic and Ultima Underworld (but better than Heretic). Fast, ferocious, and very bloody

R33 PD33 T35,

VEN 2 72

US Gold, £29.99

More like an add-on disk than a sequel.

R50



C X-WING SU LucasArts, £44.95

Excellent Star Wars-based space combat game that spawned a myriad offshoots.

R2 PD17, 29 Th

ADVENTURE

ALONE IN THE DARK 3 95 Infogrames, £34.99 (compilation)

AITD 3 was supposedly the last in the trilogy, except that Time Gate could easily be AITD Available as a budget compilation containing all three AITD games - and given the difficulty level, this gives you approximately five years of gameplay for your money. Barg-ola!

ALJEN ODYSSEY 77

Philips, £44.99

Plodding but pretty adventure; a sort of Bioforge/Cyberia hybrid.

R33 PD33



Mindscape, £44.99

Atmospheric blend of two first-person viewed classics. Ultima Underworld and System Shock, with yet another Knights Templar theme. Engaging, tricky, but very rewarding.

R39 PD38



BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD 87 Viacom New Media, £39.99

Point-and-click adventure featuring all the regular characters from the series. Snappy and amusing dialogue, some unusual subgames and plenty of puzzle-solving for adventure game traditionalists. Cool.

R35 PD35

ATH A STEEL SKY 65 Virgin Interactive, £12.99 (b)

Comic book-style adventure. Good humour, but no depth.

R18 T16

BIG RED ADVENTURE 70

Core Design, £39.99

Follow-up to Nippon Safes, only not as bad.



Electronic Arts, £44.99

Stunning-looking, action-packed adventure game with built-in unarmed (and armed) combat entirely free of charge. Extremely difficult, its tension derives from the race against time scenario.

R25 PD26 T28

US Gold, £44.99

Technically impressive Journeyman Project sequel that lacks a little gameplay.



One of the better interactive movie-type adventures. It has good pacing, a sharp plot and plenty of variety in the gameplay. Also wins Most Unlikely Use Of A Colon In Game Title award.



BLIND DATE 25 Domark, £39.99

A Blind Date game. Joy, joy, joy.



Instant Access, £39.99

Crap film. Even crappier game.

BROKEN SWORD 84

BROKEN SWUND ON Virgin Interactive, £44.99

'Interactive cartoon' from the team who brought you Beneath A Steel Sky. Gameplay tends toward lengthy conversations thanks to an icon-based speech interface which doesn't allow you to phrase questions yourself. Gorgeous scenery, and well worth a look - more than a match for many of the FMV interactive movies around.

ICLES OF THE SWORD 68

Psygnosis, £39.99

Boring adventure puzzler set in the time of King Arthur.



MANDER BLOO Mindscape, £44.99

Nice-looking young chit of a thing, but it asks too much of the person playing it. It's very weird, like a sort of French Twin Peaks, and it doesn't really tell you what you're supposed to be doing. But it draws you in.

R23 T26



COMPANIONS OF XANTH 84 Accolade, £39.99

Short-lived but diverting adventure - almost as much fun as the Friends of John McCarthy.

R16

Virgin, £44.99

Pre-rendered shoot 'em up fails to score highly shock.

R22 PD22

CYCLONE 78

Mindscape, £44.99

Another Doom clone from the people behind Heretic. You can fly and look up and down.

Virgin Interactive/Bethesda, £44.95

Attempt at an open-ended D&D jobbie, that ends up just being a jobbie.



DARKSEED 90

Cyberdreams, £44.99 HR Geiger-inspired, challenging adventure with against-the-clock-style gameplay. Macabre and scarier than a naked Bernard Manning.

Mindscape, £44.99 DARK SUN II: WAKE OF THE RAVAGER 80

Like most SSI offerings it's about as graphically sophisticated as the Bayeux Tapestry, but AD&D fans will love it.



A very taxing adventure with very American humour which isn't quite up to the standard of the classic LucasArts offerings.

R7 PD17 T7



LucasArts/VIE, £44.99

A return to the good old days of classic point-and-click adventures for LucasArts, although it doesn't actually reach the

heights of Indiana Iones, Monkey Island or Sam And Max. A good, involving story, a fair amount of atmosphere, and it's not too difficult to get through.

R35 PD32 T37



Psygnosis, £49.99

A staggeringly high score for this very difficult adventure game based around the books of Terry Pratchett, It's funny, if you like the boy Pratchett's humour, extremely entertaining - and very, very hard.

R22 PD23 T30, 55



DISCWORLD II 93 Psygnosis, £44.99

This sprawly sequel is one of the best adventure games around, based loosely around Pratchett's books Mort and Reaper Man. Unlike the first game, you won't find yourself wandering around endlessly, lost and stuck, because they've lowered the difficulty to a more manageable level. It's still challenging, as well as enjoyable and funny, with the gameplay heavily influenced by classics like Monkey Island.

R55

Mindscape, £44.99

Nice-looking, great-sounding pre-rendered adventure with Ultima Underworld-style combat that has you spending an awfully long time walking about in empty scenery, but when it gets going, is quite engrossing.

R23

REAMWEB 74

Empire Interactive, £44.99 So-called 'cyberpunk' RPG with a badly-

drawn shagging scene. R21 PD22



Alone In The Dark-style gameplay with ellipsoid-generated characters, no inventory and a far higher pert buttocks-count. Difficult, with some tricky puzzles, and the constant running away can be wearing until you get some serious pointy weaponry, but still good nonetheless.

R21 T24

Mindscape, £44.99

Good story; lacklustre presentation. A poor man's Ultima VII.

R35 PD33

TEIN: THROUGH THE EYES OF THE STER 79

Interplay, £44.99



LucasArts/Virgin, £44.99

Main biker-guy has a voice so deep it makes Lee Marvin sound like John Inman. Sadly, it has a god-awful sub-Road Rash arcade beat

'em up on bikes bit in the middle which

spoils the flow of the whole thing. Apart from that, it's a cool point-and-clicker.

R27 PD26 T29





Sierra On-Line, £44,99

say brooding, atmospheric thriller.

Tim Curry does the voice for the hero in a louche camp style in this tense, some would



Well-acted FMV-based interactive movie with a complex plot that actually has a fair bit of gameplay, although it's not the hardest game you'll ever come across.

RS6 TS9, 50



THE GENE MACHI Vic Tokai, £44.99

Pleasant point-and-clicker in the stye of the LucasArts classics, except that it's British. Nice backdrops, an interesting HG Wells/Jules Verne storyline set in the 19th Century, and humour that will make you smile. Puzzles may be a tad easy for rockhard adventurers, but still enjoyable.



ESTER 83

Wirgin Interactive, £39.99

Despite lorry-loads of FMV footage, Harvester provides plenty of traditional, old-fashioned adventurey gameplay. Those with sensitive stomachs may find it all a bit gore-tastic; the politically correct may object to voyeuristic shots of a chick hanging around in suspenders and undies; those who don't care either way will find proper puzzles, an involving plot, and interesting sub-plots.

HELL: A CYBER INK THRILLER 25

Gametek, £39.99

If you must experience hell, sit through a conversation in this.





ATLANTIS 93

LucasArts, £12.99

Budget, all-talkie version of one of the best adventures ever made. Three ways to play, depending on how hard you want to think, whether you like an occasional bout of fisticuffs, or whether you want a bit of help from your lippy, sidekick Sophia.



INDIANA JONES AND HIS DESKTOP ADVENTURES 80

LucasArts, £39,99

Weird desktop adventure game-cum Windows 'toy' that you can load whenever you want to try your hand at a number of mini-puzzles featuring the eponymous whipwielder.

Rul PDu0

T THE EARTH QUEST FOR THE ORB 72

US Gold, £39.99

Pretty, LucasArts-style old-fashioned pointand-clicker.

R) SCI, £44.99

Point-and-click adventure that can be amusing at times, but would have been better without the stereotypical minorities and the huge-breasted chick.

BSB PDSB T-1



KING'S QUEST VII 93 C Sierra, £44.99

Excellent adventure game with some mindboggling puzzles, marred only by the fact that everyone, even the supposedly evil ogres, tries to be cuter than Hathaway out of ER's top lip.



IIGHTS OF XENTAR 10

Megatech, £49.99

Steaming pile of shite masquerading as an adventure game.

RYRANDIA 3 87 Virgin, £29.99

Good quality adventure, now available as part of the Westwood Studios 10th Anniversary Pack, along with the first two games (Legend Of Kyrandia, Hand Of Fate) and Dune II and Lands Of Lore. Well worth 30 quid.

DS OF LORE SEE KYRANDIA 3

ER MAN 77

Sales Curve Interactive, £54.99

Pretty movie, shame about the gameplay.





LITTLE BIG ADVENTU

Electronic Arts, £44,99

Pretty-looking, gorgeously animated, isometrically-viewed adventure. Quite hard and the auto-save feature can be a pain in the arse, but worth investing some time in.

R21

Virgin, £34.99

Interactive dinosaur storybook - Jurassic Park meets Dragon Lore.

R25 PD26

ERANZAN 68

Mindscape, £39.99

Less-than-impressive RPG with the world's snappiest name.

R24 T28



PPET TREAS Activision, £34.99

Another top title featuring the only loveable

3DO, the 3DO

3DO, Studio

creatures ever to be based on underwear. This time it's a point-and-click adventure inspired by their latest film, aimed squarely at children. However, the blend of video and sumptuous hand-drawn backgrounds, easyto-follow adventures and humorous subgames will charm adults as much.

R.

POLIS 79

Electronic Arts, £44.99

Weird, gothic horror superhero adventure.



HORMALITY 90 Gremlin Interactive, £44.99

Ambitious point-and-clicker with firstperson viewpoint that can drone on a bit at

times but has its fans in the office. The hero's a bit of a dork, but at least it's trying something new.

RSS PDS6

MERIDIAN

A DAY AT THE ARENA

Not for the faint hearted, a day at the Arena promises blood, guts and gore. You can win big, but at the highest of stakes. Here they fight to the death. Safe return doubtful.

Insurance not provided on this tour.

GHOST BUSTING IN THE BERDONNE CANYONS

Venture along the Berdonne canyons to Castle Victoria. Legend has it that ghosts and zombies patrol the castle grounds. This is the tour for bounty hunters, but tread carefully, it's no picnic.

Protective clothing must be worn.

HERMIT SPOTTING

Ketanaa the Hermit is one of the most eccentric characters in Meridian. Affectionately known as the 'Resident Wacko' you'll find his hut deep in The Forest of Meridian. Do try and strike up a conversation, but be wary not to believe everything he says. Food provided, but please don't feed the Hermit.

Two Day tour

ORC TRAPPING

Trek deep into the Forest of Meridian to The Caves, where Orcs come in their droves to search for the Chalice of Rain. Even first time trappers are likely to be in luck here, and for the more advanced, the opportunity to capture the Chalice itself offers the ultimate challenge. Leaves from the fountain at 0800 (GMT).

Full day tour

WEAPON SHOPPING IN TOS

The Town of Tos boasts some of the best weapon shops in Meridian. In this ancient trading town you can buy or sell weapons at a very fair price. Be sure not to miss Ye Olde Blacksmith of Tos where Fehr'loi Qan will sell you the finest hand-made armour. Meet outside Frisconar's Mysticals 0900 (GMT)

Full day tour

Packages start from £39.99

For further information contact your nearest 3DO dealer or visit: http://meridian.3do.com/meridian/



IRACY 36

Domark, £39.99

The worst-scripted adventure game known to man. Like an interactive episode of Never The Twain.

R29 PD26



RECTIVE 92 Virgin/Access, £44.95

The nice-looking follow-up to Under A Killing Moon features the same private dick hero, and is an engrossing, FMV-based adventure with decent puzzles and an absorbing plot. And as there are three different paths through the game, it's VFM as well as FMV. It also comes with a novel based on the game, which, if you read it first (and apparently it's quite good) will spoil it completely.

POLICE QUEST IV: OPEN SEASON 80 Sierra On-Line, £44.99

Another in the long line of procedurally-based cop games. Walk about, take notes, eat doughnuts, beat Rodney King to a bloody pulp. It's all in a day's work at LAPD HQ.

R19 T15

POLICE QUEST: SWAT 83 Sierra, £49.99

If you wanna make it as a SWAT Team member, ya gotta practice. And practice. And practice. Gun-toting cop fun, still procedurally heavy but only needs light-gun compatibility to make it perfect.

PRISONER OF ICE 88 Infogrames, £44.95

The second in Infogrames' Cthulhu-based series of adventures; follow up to Shadow Of The Comet. Good plot, good atmosphere.

R29 PD51

QUEST FOR FAME 80 R QUEST FS...

This music biz-based adventure uses Aerosmith's music and has you playing your way from obscurity to megastardom, using a plastic plectrum you can strum on a tennis racket, a spaghetti strainer or even your partner's pubic hair, if you want. Strum well enough to succeed and you'll end up playing with Aerosmith themselves...

REALMS OF ARKANIA: STAR TRAIL 85 US Gold, £44.99

You'd never guess from the title, but it's an RPG. Oh, alright then. The sequel to Blade Of Destiny, it's old-fashioned stuff and no mistake: party-forming, spell-casting, isometric scrapping, bosomy damsel ogling... gnarly-fingernailed ones will love it.



RETURN TO ZORK 90 Activision, £45.99

One of the first good adventures to use FMV footage effectively without compromising gameplay.

R10 T11

ROBINSON'S REQUIREMENT OF THE PRINCIPLE OF THE PRINCIPLE

Original but flawed survival game in which you utilise your wits, your huge range of prescription drugs and your hand-to-hand combat skills. The only game ever to give you the option to amputate your own limbs.

US Gold, £12.99 (budget) SAM AND MAX HIT THE ROAD 93

An all-time high point in point-and-click adventures. You control the eponymous heroes (a dog and rabbit Freelance Police team) in their pursuit of Trixie the Giraffe Necked Girl who's been abducted from a freak show. All-talkie with a funny script and a good mix of puzzles. LucasArts at its very best: an essential purchase at this price.

R11, 16 PD17 T13, 15, 39

SANTA FE MYSTERIES: THE ELK MOON MURDER

72

Activision, £44.95

Superior multimedia murder-mystery fun centring around a Native American community.

R SEHPEN Origin, £34.99 SERPENT ISLE: ULTIMA VII PART 2 89

Origin's flair for storytelling and atmosphere makes this a corker of an RPG.

SHADOW OF THE COMET 88 Virgin White Label, £12.99

Decent all-talkie adventure based on HP Lovecraft's Cult Of The Cthulu books. A case of involving storyline winning out over less than top-notch presentation, but in spite of the odd fault Lovecraft fans will love it.

R18, 38 T5, 6, 7



SILVERLOAD 7

Millennium/Psygnosis, £39.99

That's seven. Out of a hundred. Or approximately £5.71 per point.

SIMON THE SORCEROR 2 84 AdventureSoft, £29.99

Simon the Ginger-Haired, Pony-Tailed Foppy Sorceror (to give him his full title) returns with DMs and another batch of smart-arsed jokes. Chris Barrie-less (as if anyone cares), it's still a good all-talkie point-and-clicker. Now available in a budget package with the prequel and a free (disgusting) t-shirt.

R30 T10, 32

SPACE QUEST 6 70

Sierra, £44.99

Trite adventure completely devoid of humour and imagination.

SPYCHAP1 91 Activision, £49.99 SPYCRAFT 91

Win95-only 'spy simulator'. Unfortunately free of fast cars, birds in swimsuits and spectacular stunts, but loads of FMV and chocka with puzzles, spy satellites, decoding routines and original features. Engrossing,

STAR TREK: JUDGEMENT RITES 70

Virgin Interactive, £12.99

Kirk-era point-and-clicker with space combat thrown in.

RPP, T13, 15

STAR TREK TNG: A FINAL UNITY 94 MicroProse, £49.99

There are shitloads of Star Trek adventure games, but this one is the best. If you like sticking a pasty on your forehead and prancing about with your trousers tucked in your chelsea boots, this is the one for you.

R27 PD27 T31, 32

Interplay, £44.99

Dated flick-screen RPG, best kept under a stone. Arf arf.

R34 PD33 T40



Electronic Arts/Origin, £19.99

Wonderful, atmospheric first-person viewed action adventure game with a cyberpunk tinge, Basically, it's like Ultima Underworld in space. And available on budget.

R20 PD21, 28 T21, 22, 23



From the team that brought you the Alone In The Dark series comes a game that looks remarkably like AIID. Knights Templar-based fun, with all the joys and faults - of AITDs 1-3.

R36 PD36 T38



ULTIMA UND WORLDS 94 WORLD 2: LABYRINTH OF

Origin, £44.95

Superb first-person viewed adventure that's never been matched.

ER A KILLING MOON 70

US Gold, £12.99

Interactive movie on four CDs featuring Margot Kidder, James Earl Jones, loads of acting, a lot of digitised backgrounds and the faintest whiff of gameplay.

R19 PD19



Warner Interactive, £39.99 VORTEX 80

Interactive movie? Or game? Only Our Lord Baby Jesus can really tell.

R29 PD30

ZORK NEMESIS 65

Activision, £44.99 Return To Zork follow-up abandons gameplay entirely and opts for a Myst-like approach.

DRIVING

BIG RED RACING 87 R Domark, £39.99

Like a first-person perspective Micro Machines, it has you hairing about in different wacky vehicles (snow ploughs, monster trucks etc) - and you can even recreate The Italian Job in a mini.

DESTRUCTION DERBY 90 Sony Interactive, £44.99

A cross between a racing game and smash 'em up where you chalk up more points for wrecking opponents' cars than for winning a race. Great graphics and initially exhilarating, but one-player gameplay isn't the deepest you'll ever find. Plenty of network options, though.

R33 PD34 T38, 43



Comprehensive simulation that has you hanging from your Ron Dennis 'standing up' frame and managing a Formula 1 team through an on-going Championship, taking charge of everything from tyre deals and team sponsorship to the hiring and firing of prima-donna drivers. F1 anorak heaven

R34 PD38

F1 MANAGER 89 Europress, £39.99

For the F1 anorak for whom F1 Grand Prix Manager isn't quite painstakingly detailed enough. The emphasis is even more heavily biased towards the resources side of things, so you'll be up to your ears in balance sheets, regulations, sponsors, statistics and

merchandising, as well as R&D, design, assembly and, oh yes, racing.

FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 92 MicroProse, £14.99

The classic F1 racing game, now available in a number of compilations or on its own. Still great after all these years.

MicroProse, £30.00 FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 2 95

Superb upgrade to the classic racing game with menus and set-up screens to tinker about with to your heart's content, and the game engine is unmatched. To get the textured graphics in all their glory you'll need a decent Pentium, but it still looks good and is playable in low-res.



Full-contact arcade driving game like a cross between Ridge Racer and the ancient Amiga classic, Stunt Car Racer. Excellent graphics and 16 tracks, some of which are spectacular. Unfortunately it looks crap on anything less than a Pentium.

R32 RD33



Anti-gravity racing game based on the Magic
Carpet engine with lots of shooting of opponents, but a disconcertingly short view ahead of your car/truck/hovery thing (just as in Magic Carpet, in fact).

R29 PD29

INDYCAR RACING 93 Virgin Interactive, £9.99 (b)

Definitive simulation of the art of racing about in circles with almost all the same ingredients as the sequel; now available on budget in a number of compilations or on its own for a tenner.

RIO RDIO

Virgin Interactive, £17.99 INDYCAR RACING EXPA

Five excellent extra tracks (and one more roundabout) for your collection. Of course, it would have been nice if they'd been in the original game.

INDYCAR 2 90 Papyrus/Virgin, £34.99

Follow-up to the first oval circuit racing game which really doesn't add much. It does have glorious SVGA graphics, but if you already have Indycar 1, there's little reason to buy this. Get F1GP2 instead.

RS's PDS MEGARACE 65

Mindscape, £39.99

A case of, 'Ooh, aargh': Ooh, it looks lovely. Aargh, it plays shite.

RIS PDIE

MEGARACE 2 79 Mindscape, £44.95

An improvement on the original (which isn't hard) but there are loads of better driving games around - and they aren't "on rails".

C MICRO MACHINES 2 93 Codemasters, £44.99

Brilliant sequel with different tracks and the same instant appeal. Also comes with a nifty little track designer.

R29 PD29

ONSTER TRUCK MADNESS 78

Microsoft, £44.99

Good, fun racing game in trucks with tyres the size of Pluto. Part Stunt Cart Racer, part NASCAR Racing.



Roundabout racing in armour-plated saloon

cars from the people who brought you IndyCar.



THE NEED FOR SPEED 89 Electronic Arts, £44.99

Race extremely expensive cars down the longest stretches of highway in America without a turn-off, skid about to leave rubber on the road, crash spectacularly... then do it all again. Or look at the multimeeja bits, showing how obscenely expensive your car really is. 3DO-style crash and burn action comes to the PC.

RS1 PDS1 T40



NETWORK Q RAC RALLY 94 Europress, £39.99

Absolutely superb driving game that oozes atmosphere like a running sore in a heatwave. Every stage of the eponymous rally has been lovingly re-created, allowing you to drive like a maniac down single-track roads into blind corners with the best of them. Great stuff.



VIE, £29.99

Good-looking, fast-moving arcade driving game with six different tracks, six different supercars, manual or automatic options and three different skill levels. Very arcadey approach, down to the time bonuses on stages. Unfortunately, this means you can't go round the tracks the wrong way or do any of the other zany things wacky characters love. Good stuff, though.

R33 PD35 T49

SPEED HASTE 79

Electronic Arts, £29.99

Cross between Virtua Racing and Daytona but not as good.

R38 PD37



SUPERKARTS 82

SUPERKANTS of Virgin Interactive, £29.99 (budget compilation)

The PC's attempt at a Super Mario Kart clone, now available (with IndyCar Racing and F1GP 1) on the White Lines compilation. You get fast-moving, arcade action all the way, complete with a network option.

R25 PD19



TEAM F1 88 Electronic Arts, £39.99

F1 management game that's even more comprehensive than F1GP Manager. Starting from scratch, you are responsible for everything from bank loans, R&D, sponsors, wind tunnel and engine testing through to office expansion. manufacturing contracts and even industrial espionage. Overall it's a bit fiddly and confusing, especially as it's played against the clock, but ultimately worth the slog.

VIRTUAL KARTS 71

MicroProse, £44.95

Featuring karts that handle like supertankers, in hi-res jerko-vision.

R35 PD3

Sony Interactive, £44,99

Ineffectual and rather disappointing conversion of top PlayStation anti-gravity racing game.

PUZZLES

THE 11TH HOUR 67

Trilobyte/VIE, £49.99

Follow-up to The 7th Guest with more puzzles in fancy settings.

ALL NEW WORLD OF LEMM

Digital Integration, £39.99

Except it isn't really that new.



BAKII BAKII ANIMAL 90 Sega PC, £29.99

Sega's PC boys finally come good in a big way with the coolest puzzle game around. Tetris or Puyo Puyo-style gameplay has you matching up cutesy animals and their food to clear the screen. Great fun in single-player, with a fab two-player single-screen option and a rather excellent

kicking soundtrack.



Dynamix, £39.99

More top-notch puzzling fun with sprockets and cogs

R10 PD22 T33



FURY OF THE FUR RIFS 85 Mindscape3, £39.99

Interesting platform puzzler, not for the easily frustrated.



THE INCREDIBLE MACHINES 84 P Dynamix, £39.99

Manipulate and arrange Mousetrap-style

combinations of gadgets, tools and bits and pieces from the nether regions of your shed to set up chain reactions and solve puzzles. Enjoyable stuff.

HPP T6. 7

AINGS 3D 71

Psygnosis, £39.99

Same game, different angle.

RS1 PD99



LITTL DIVIL 90 Gremlin, £34.99

Excellent puzzle game with a strong element of adventuring, put together with wit and flair.

RIO IS PING TI

NTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL 69

7th Level, £39.99

Mildly diverting, if over-familiar, puzzlebased interactive picture book of the film. Sort of.

R-19

MYST 67

Electronic Arts, £44.99

Puzzle game set amid pretty backdrops. Mac owners like it.

R15 RD16 T17



HANGHAI II: DRAGON'S EYE 88 Activision, £29.99

Excellent collection of Mah Jongg games for Windows, featuring a variety of different setups and colourful icons for the tiles.



105 different solitaire card games and five different ways to play them, for the sad people among us with no friends in the entire world.

SIMULATION

1942: PACIFIC AIR WAR 89 MicroProse, £44.99

Takes the decent naval strategy game Carrier Battles and adds a full-blown flight sim with pretty good flight models so that you can fly the missions yourself. Blimey O'Reilly.



ACES OF THE DEEP 90 Dynamix/Sierra, £39.99

Superb U-Boat simulation that's got the lot: the unbearable tension; the long silences; the smell of other people's armpits in recycled air; the chance to torpedo shipfuls of Scouse babies. Who could ask for more?

AH-64D LONGBOW 90 C AH-64D LUmubon C. Electronic Arts, £44.99

Great-looking chopper sim with good music and a great interface that tries to be a game. Be warned: even on a P133 it can go all jerko in hi-res, and it needs 97Mb hard disk space. And there's no network play either. But it looks and plays fab.



Another flight sim set in a parallel universe from Rowan, combining the wars-type aircraft with a fantasy strategy game in which you have to use planes, launched from airships, to take over the country.

R30 PD31



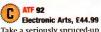
ACHE LONGS Digital Integration, £39.99

The best helicopter flight model around which means it's remarkably easy to roast your bony ass in a collision with Mother Earth. Nothing comes close to matching it for authenticity, tactical planning and spot-on handling, but if it's arcade thrills and spills you want, go for Comanche vs Werewolf

RSI PRSO

ARMORED FIST 86 US Gold/Novalogic, £29.99

The good-looking, sophisticated tank sim that sounds like a very scary sex aid. Comanche on wheels. Er, tracks.



Take a seriously spruced-up US Navy Fighters engine combined with a large number of 'conceptual' planes with different flight models; add an interactive reference guide courtesy of Jane's and a complex missionbuilding option and you get a seriously good flight sim for propeller-heads everywhere.



Great-looking arcade chopper action. Now available on World Of Combat budget compilation, with Armored Fist and Wolfpack.

COMANCHE VS WEREWOLF 88 R COMANCHE VS WELL

Take the original Comanche chopper game, then chuck in all the add-on missions and a completely new extra game which lets you play two-player modem or serial link-up battles. Not the best flight model around. snooty propeller-head purists will sneer, but it's a good arcade blast with excellent graphics.



DAWN PATROL 80 Empire Interactive, £44.99

Nice-looking WWI flight sim that lays claim to being an 'interactive book'. In other words, you sit through a lot of other garbage

between dogfights. R21 PD21



C EF2000 97 Ocean/DID, £49.99

The flight sim with something for everyone, from complex missions in an on-going war scenario to jump-right-in-and-start-blasting arcade thrills. Based on a plane that isn't even finished yet, the flight model's so good they're using it to train pilots.



F14 FLEET DEFENDER 86 MicroProse, £44.99

Heavyweight flight sim; not as good as



Ultra-complex but extremely rewarding Windows 95-only submarine sim. Newcomers to the genre might find it a bit too much of a mare to deal with.

FIGHTER DUEL 65

Philips Media, £39.99 Sub-standard flight sim. Avoid.

RS's PD'so



FLIGHT SIM 95 95 Microsoft, £48.99

The inevitable appearance of a Windows 95 version of the ever-popular sim that actually teaches you to fly gets a big thumbs up. Good graphics, the chance to sit in the dark at home, fly around the world and land on the M4.



Great-looking simulation that actually teaches you how to fly. Lovers of mayhem will find it low on baby carriage/napalm interaction.



Electronic Battlefield System (EBS) add-on for Falcon 3, allowing you to fly eponymous plane in network scraps or standalone missions.



Digital Integration, £44.99

It's from Dl, so you already know it's going to be a seriously heavy simulation. The emphasis is on hyper-realism rather than presentation so it will run on low-spec machines, but it's harder than juggling atoms. Loads of multiplay options though so you can die among friends.



Excellent helicopter flight sim based around the ubiquitous, extremely effective Russian chopper. Very realistic and therefore very hard to fly properly.



MAVY STRIKE 90 Empire Interactive, £44.99

Two games in one: a flight sim, where you pilot a jet fighter in the slightly scary future, and a military command sim. Very atmospheric, it's one that grows on you the more you play it.

R33 T38



PACIFIC STRIKE 80 Electronic Arts, £39.99

Good stuff. Strike Commander game engine and graphics, but set in WWII Pacific campaign. Needs a P90 to run smoothly.



(C)

Maris Multimedia, £59.00

Stunning astronomy program crammed with photographs and video sequences that even lets you stand, for example, on the surface of Pluto and gaze at the stars.

SSI, £44.99

TIE Fighter/Wing Commander wannabe in glorious SVGA.



SEA WULP 83
Electronic Arts, £44.99 Hugely atmospheric submarine sim with a control interface from hell.

SILENT HUNTER 90 SSI/Mindscape, £39.99

Superb WWII sub sim that's got the lot: catand-mouse stuff, creaking hulls, big explosions, depth charge attacks, blokes in chunky polo-neck sweaters...

SPACE SIMULATOR 75

Microsoft, £39.99

It simulates space. Which is probably overreaching itself a bit. Get RedShift instead.

STRIKE COMMANDER 65

Electronic Arts, £11.99

Some brilliant bits: cinematic sequences, amazing graphics and sound, varied missions And some unbrilliant bits: flying isn't as good as the plot stuff and it's sluggish.

R 3, 9, 13 T6



SU27 FLANKER 95 Electronic Arts, £11.99

Comprehensive flight sim based on the scariest aircraft ever built. Features the best flight model around, developed with input from top Russian pilots, but has less than dazzling graphics. Aimed at serious propeller-heads rather than those seeking lightweight thrills and spills (the instrument panels are even in Cyrillic script). No network or serial-link multiplay options, but a better simulation than EF2000, MiG29 or Tornado.

R35 PD33



SUBWAR 2050 88 Mindscape, £44.95

Futuristic submarine game that's comes out

like a slow-motion flight sim. Good fun, though. Apparently.

B11 T12



R TFX 80 Ocean, £44.99 **TFX 80**

Near-future flight sim with graphics and sound that still stand up today.



TOP GUN 92 Mindscape, £44.99

An outstanding flight sim with a cinematic storyline and loads of atmosphere, it's let down slightly by misleading views and a hires frame rate on a P133 like a supertanker performing a U-turn. Still good, though.

R57 PD58 50



Digital Integration, £44.99

Still some kind of benchmark for an indepth flight sim, Tornado is so deep you'll need a bathysphere. Low-level attack sim with excellent ground visuals that's definitely not for beginners.



US NAVY FIGHTERS 90 Electronic Arts, £44.99

One of the best-looking, most accurate flight sims around, lacking only a multiplayer facility.



US MARINE FIGHTERS 92 Electronic Arts, £19.99

Add-on disk for US Navy Fighters, featuring US and Yank Harriers, Yaks, the Russian supersonic Harrier rival and a gunship version of a Hercules transport plane, Great stuff, but still no network mode.

WINGS OF GLORY 78

Electronic Arts, £44.99

Good-looking WWI flight sim with tendency towards jerkovision.

R25 PD25

SPORT

ACTUA SOCCER 92

Gremlin Interactive, £34.99

Arcade action featuring all the major national teams (and Wales). Excellent graphics, thanks to a 3D polygonised pitch arrangement and more camera angles than a BBC costume drama. And despite one or two large faults in the gameplay, it's still the best of a poor bunch of PC footy games.

R35 RD35 PD35 T53

ALEX DAMPIER PRO HOCKEY 66 Merit Software, £39.95

Ice hockey with overly-complicated control system.

R98 PD97

BRETT HULL HOCKEY '95 73

Accolade/Warner, £39.99

Top-down viewed ice hockey action. Not as good as NHL 96.



P MANAGER 2 92

The finest football management game ever made. Every team in England, thousands of players from all over the world, minutely adjustable playing styles and formations The only management game where you feel that what you're doing has an effect.



PIONSHIP MANAGER 2 DATA DISKS C CH/ 92

Domark, £19.99

A similar core of foreign players, but for the German, Italian, Spanish, French and Dutch/Belgian leagues.

Gremlin, £29.99

Or Actua Soccer Again. Not enough to warrant another full-price game.

FIFA SOCCER CD-ROM 78

Electronic Arts, £44.95

Old, big-sprite FIFA with commentary by Mr J Motson. Available in the Essential Collections: Sport compilation, with PGA Tour 486 and F1GP.

R21 T20



FIFA gets the Virtual Stadium treatment with multiple camera angles, motioncaptured players and a cardboard crowd. All major international teams are included, along with a great league option using club sides in many countries. Still has an overcomplicated control system though, and players do too much without your input. And your team changes aren't saved from game to game either, which is a wind-up.



Nicks all the best features from all the other baseball games around and combines them, to make the best of its kind around. It comes out every year with different features.

FRONT PAGE SPORTS FOOTBALL PRO 85 Dynamix/Sierra, £44.99

The best American football game on the PC, combining a superb play-designer, great graphics, multiple camera angles and good arcade action.



HARDBALL 9 ba Accolade/Warner, £39.99

Good-looking, very playable baseball game, but it's not as good as FPS Baseball.

R27 PD22

IAN BOTHAM INTERNATIONAL CRICKET 70 Beam, £34.99

Good, playable conversion of SNES hit, with unnecessary and crap FMV footage.



The PC's premier tennis game has FMV players, but an idiosyncratic control system which is difficult to come to terms with so much so that you have the option of not playing the shots yourself.

R17



Still the best snooker game around on the PC after all these years.

KICK OFF 3: EUROPEAN CHALLENGE 70

Anco. £29.99

The best Kick Off to date which isn't really saying much.

IKS LS 94 EIDOS Interactive, £44.95

The long-awaited re-vamp to the world's greatest golf sim gives you more gameplay options, even more gorgeous graphics and a re-designed menu and view-selection system, making it better than ever. Includes a builtin upgrader for all the old data-disk courses you spent your wodge on in the past.

MADDEN NFL 97 87 Electronic Arts, £39.95

This, the first incarnation of Madden on the PC for about six years, finally provides the sort of quality now taken for granted on the consoles, and so becomes the best American footy game on the PC.

MAN UTD: THE DOUBLE 71

Krysalis, £29.99

Complete with free bonus: 12 minutes of extra time for problem games where victory is essential.

R98



A LIVE 95 on EA, £34.99

Good basketball sim, in a version one of FIFA isometric style. Pre-Virtual Stadium, so the crowd looks good too.

R HBA LIVE 96 85 EA, £44.99

Basketball gets the Virtual Stadium treatment; multiple angles for each camera. an expanded polystyrene crowd, three levels of difficulty and all the usual season play options. A bit muted graphically, and can be confusing when it gets crowded.



NHL HOCKEY '96 90 Electronic Arts, £44.99

EA's ice hockey game gets its annual upgrade of stats and player names along with its own Virtual Stadium, complete with unconvincing crowd. Excellent animation, multiple camera angles and the players even have little reflections on the ice.

R32 PD35

OVERLORD 85 Virgin Interactive, £39.99

WWII flight sim based around you guessed it Operation Overlord (also known as the D-Day landings). Features mainly ground attack missions with the odd dogfight or bomber intercept, has two padlock views (count 'em) and some decent flight models.

PICTURE PERFECT GOLF 30 Empire interactive, £44.99

The pictures may be perfect but the gameplay sucks big-time, bub.

ROS POST



Not only excellent-looking but also great-playing, fine-smelling golf game.

which is available in the Essential Collections: Sport compilation along with FIFA Soccer and F1GP.



EA TOUR '96 94 Electronic Arts, £44.99

Two different courses on offer this time, and new Links-inspired windows that provide extra views of the action. Main view graphics now look less sharp than last year's model but give more sense of depth. If you're not that bothered about having the latest version, last year's game is cheaper, has more courses and loses nothing in gameplay.

R32 PD37 T53



Finally, a game featuring the people who won the Ryder Cup rather than the also-rans. A different development team has tweaked the ball physics so it responds better to the contours, which makes it the best arcade golf game. And it's Yank-free.

PLANET FOOTBALL 68

Infogrames, £39.99

Sub-standard PC footie fare. As if there's any other kind.

STRIKER 95 62 Time Warner, £34.99

Looks alright, plays not so alright. Memorable only for the absolute and complete awfulness of Andy Gray's commentary which had us reaching for the vom-bucket literally seconds into the first match.

THN BASS TOUR Electronic Arts, £39.99

Fishing tournament game that's more to do with amassing money than the joy of hooking big floppy gilled things. Trophy Bass is better.

PHY BASS 85 R Sierra, £39.99

Near-perfect simulation of the noble art, concerned more with the purity of thought and deed than the baser elements of money-grabbing tournaments. Comes with a voucher for a free bag of chips and a sachet of vinegar.



Interplay, £44.99

Superbly implemented pool sim with intuitive controls and a multi-player network option. As close to real pool as you can get, apart from the little piles of coins on the side of the table. (And only 90 times the price.)

R28 PD27

STRATEGY

US Gold, £39.99

Converted railroads-based board game, at about three times the price.

IOSS THE RI **NE 86** MicroProse, £44.99

Tank-based battle strategy game which takes a while to come to terms with thanks to a heavy-duty manual and a less-than-intuitive multi-view interface. Great depth if you can get your head round it.

AFTERLIFE 88 Virgin/LucasArts, £44.99

God game modelled on Sim City in which you actually play God, 'zoning' areas of punishment and reward for the souls who come under your charge. Liberal helpings of humour, along with good longevity in the gameplay, mean you don't have to be Billy Graham to enjoy it either.

R40 PD39



A business sim that throws you in at the deep end of corporation management. Not nearly as easy to get into as the Maxis titles, unless you're a budding mover and shaker



ALIEN LEGACY 80 Sierra On-Line, £39.99

who doesn't do lunch.

Another of the several million space strategy games vying for your dosh, but one of the better ones. A bit like a cheaper version of Outpost without the pretty bits. Daunting at first, but becomes addictive.

ALLIED GENERAL 83 SSI/Mindscape, £44.99

Windows 95-based follow-up to the hugely successful Panzer General that should appeal to wargamers and casual dilettantes alike. One or two faults, but its simplicity should appeal.

RS7 PD38



CY 93 C Virgin, £39.99

Take all the bits you loved from just about every strategy, god or warfare game, set it in the context of space exploration and planetary conquest, and you get Ascendancy. Get stuck into this and you can kiss goodbye to your social life, career and an acceptable level of personal hygiene.

Empire Interactive, £40.00

Serious and deep, deep strategy game that's the first to be designed exclusively for Windows 95. Dragging war games into the 90s? Whatever next? Good graphics?



D GETTYSBERG 87 Empire Interactive, £39.99

Second in the Windows 95-based series. An excellent feel for the Gettysberg battles, complete with QuickTime movies and a Quick Start guide, but it needs 130Mb of hard disk space for a full installation, or 60Mb for a minimum. Which is quite a lot.

Empire Interactive, £39.99

Third in the series, with more views and unit types, but dumber AI. And still no scenario editor.

BATTLE BUGS 65

Dynamix, £39.99 A battle game with bugs in it.

R19 PD20



DR 93

Blue Byte, £45.99

Third in the series of highly respected and very popular strategic battle games. Worth checking out if you like your strategy with a futuristic bent (ie your army jumper has silver patches on the elbows and shoulders).



BEDLAM 89 R BEDLum 00 Mirage, £34.99

Take a range of isometrically viewed city levels, and add a dinky little armoured HERC, with more weapons of destruction at its disposal than the average aircraft carrier, and you have a highly addictive blasterama that's like Syndicate for the impatient, with weapon power-ups rather than an R&D team.



BUZZ ALDRIN'S RACE INTO SPACE 95 Interplay, £39.99

Strategy game revolving around the USA/USSR great space race. You can be either side if you want, you snivelling pinko.



IVILIZATION II 90 MicroProse, £44.99

Enhanced sequel in full 3D which can make things cluttered at times, especially if you have a number of windows open. Combat's been tightened up, with new units and 'hit points', and even experienced Civ players will find there's a lot to learn. (Note: Windows 95 or 3.1 with WinG only.)

R36 PD40 T43



CIVIL WAR 83 Empire Interactive, £44.99

The sequel to Fields Of Glory, it's the secondbest American Civil War battle strategy game. Just to be annoying, we're not telling you which is the better. Find it yourself.



CYBERJUDAS 80 Empire Interactive, £39.99

Political strategy game in which you play the President of the United States (no, not the band), complete with an interface that lets you access every country in the world. Set up trade agreements, negotiate peace settlements, track down traitors in your midst, or just shag beauty queens.



MicroProse, £44.99

Civilization I with more depth and better

graphics, released to make a quick buck until Civ 2 appeared. Allegedly.



C Virgin, £44.99

Take the strategy and resource management of *Dune 2*, add the fast-paced, real-time combat of *Cannon Fodder*, intelligent grunts, a myriad weapons, and the exploration elements of Civilization and you have a hugely addictive game.

R28 LE36 PD37 T38, 52



Virgin, £14.99

Seriously difficult add-on missions for anyone who thinks they're a bit of a C&C whizz.

EST OF THE NEW WORLD 75

Interplay, £44.99

Slow, cumbersome strategy game about... well, conquering the New World.



Interesting turn-based space exploration game with a Dune ish plot, with you building robots to mine ore from different planets in competition with other companies.



Fantasy-based strategy gore-fest alert. Hurl fireballs, gore orcs, hack, slash and generally behave like a drunken Cockney on a Friday night. Set your posse against others. Get all triumphant when you win. Take off your anorak, roll up the sleeves on your cardie and start thinking you're hard... and so on.

R19



Adventure/strategy mix that has you playing Paul Atreides, setting up a spice mining operation on Arrakis and attacking the evil Harknnen clan.



Excellent real-time strategy game. Take one of the three tribes of Arrakis and struggle to beat the others until your mouse finger is a blood-soaked mess. The forerunner to the magnificent Command & Conquer. Available on Power, Corruption and Lies compilation.

RI TE



SSI/Mindscape, £44.99

The third in the series uses the same combat and movement engine as Panzer and Allied General, but it's the most exciting wargame (if that's not an oxymoron) so far.

R39 PD37

Gametek, £39.99

Absolute classic open-ended space trading game that lets you be anything you want even a space bore.

FRONTIER: FIRST ENCOUNTERS 78

Gametek, £39.99

Enhanced version of Elite II, bugged to jiggery.



Philips Media, £29.99

If we had a Weird category, this would be in it. It's a Windows 95-only sort of strategy/action game in which you set fighting wind-up toys against each other in an attempt to get them to the other side of the playing area. Surprisingly addictive.

RIO PDS8



GENE WARS 91 Electronic Arts/Bullfrog, £39.99

Has you competing against intelligent alien life-forms to produce an efficient food chain by selective breeding, under the watchful eye of some all-powerful superior beings who don't like dirty tricks. So you have to wait until they're not watching to set your mutants on the enemy. The winner gets to live. Very frenetic and very complicated.



Even better, apparently, than Great Naval Battles I.

R16

HAMMER OF THE GODS 77

US Gold, £39.99

Simple Nordic mythology-set turn-based strategy game.

R23

HARPOON II 70

Electronic Arts, £44.99 Deadly serious, deadly dull, dead slow naval

warfare strategy game.



R THE HORDE 87 US Gold, £44.99

Slightly weird strategy game in which you try to develop and run a village, while waiting for the regular attacks by hideous, ravening monsters. A bit like being a pub landlord around here, really.

RIG PDIS

JAGGED ALLIANCE 72

Mindscape, £39.99

Risk meets Syndicate. Hardly original, but not bad.

R28 PD28 T35



KASPAROV'S GAMBIT 85 R KASPARUV S URANA.

Outstanding chess game with real attitude and personality of its own.

MACHIAVELLI THE PRINCE 89 MicroProse, £44.99 (now on budget)

Colonization-style strategy game packed to the eyebrows with assassinations, plagues pirates and political intrigue. Get caught in bed with an underage boy! Sell guns to terrorists and get away with it! Well, the historical equivalent, anyway. With play by e-mail facility.



One of the best space exploration/strategy games there is. A sort of cross between Civilization and Sim City 2000, only with space colonisation bits thrown in. Fine. addictive stuff.

R18 PD18 T19



Just one of the many thousands of playable

and engrossing hex-based wargames waiting to take you in their big, comfortable arms and protect you for the rest of your days, you huge hunk of man, you.



RULES OF ENGAGEMENT 91

Impressions, £24.99

Very complicated, very involving and very old-fashioned-looking space strategy game.



Engrossing Sim City-style strategy game, only set in the Middle Ages and everything gets built before your eyes by little men. And everyone smells a bit. They did in those days.



SETTLERS 2 92 Blue Byte, £39.99

A whole range of improvements in this sequel, including a new interface, more varied gameplay and far, far bigger levels. Frighteningly addictive.

R41 PD40



SIM ANT 82 R Maxis, £9.99

Maxis were stretching a point somewhat by this time.



C

SIM CITY 90 Maxis, £9.99

The original game that spawned a monster, it now looks really ropey and everyone has a copy of it somewhere.

#20 T22



SIM CITY 2000 92

Maxis, £39.99

Fully rotatable 3D version of the classic strategy game with far more depth (literally you have to look after stuff underground now, too) and an excellent hierarchical menu system to control it all.

R13 T15

SIM EARTH 77

Maxis, £9.99

Control the planet, balance ecosystems and pursue ecological programmes.

SIM FARM 79

Maxis, £9.99

Fiddle about in cowsheds; enjoy the sweet smell of porcine success.

RS T12

SIM LIFE 78

Maxis, £9.99

Fun with microbes.

SIM TOWER 70

Maxis, £39.99

Sim City in a skyscraper, with the world's most complicated lift control system.

R28 PD31 T30



SIM TOWN 81 R Maxis, £29.99

Or Sim City gone macro. Aimed at children, it's fun and educational in equal measures: can you make the most ecologically sound town around? Will irritate parents who are struggling to stop their kids turning into little Americans, though.

Electronic Arts, £11.99

Classic real-time strategy action game with liberal doses of death and destruction, huge gouts of blood and gore, and masses of tension and fear. A bit like The Generation Game, really.

Rt 16 PD16 T6, 7



G SPACE HULK: VENGEANCE OF THE BLOOD ANGELS 90

Electronic Arts, £49.99

Windows 95 version of the 3DO version. featuring the best missions from the original game, a new campaign, new graphics and sounds and a full 3D engine. Looks fab, but is extremely hard.

SYNDICATE PLUS SE Electronic Arts, £11.99

The classic isometric strategy game for amoral, homicidal maniacs, plus the data disks, plus a network play option.

SYNDICATE WARS 99 Electronic Arts/Bullfrog, £44.95

The long-awaited update to the classic strategy game is one of the most violent, addictive and fun games on any system, a fiendishly subversive sci-fi extravanganza that's incredibly atmospheric. The more you play it, the better it gets. And there are loads of multi-player options, too.

TACOPS 81 Strategic Plus Software, £49.99

Excitement a-bungo and endless tactical possibilities make this basic-looking realtime strategy game a must-have. Includes network play and play-by-mail/e-mail options

RIO PDI



Electronic Arts, £19.99

Design and run your own theme park, competing against others for the title of the best in the world. Design rides to make children sick. Force old ladies' hip-bones to pop out of their sockets with the G-force on your roundabout. And other stuff.

R17 T18, 19, 20, 33,

THIS MEANS WAR! 89 MicroProse, £44.99

A futuristic strategic wargame, using elements from both Command & Conquer and Transport Tycoon, Slower-paced than C&C, but engrossing once you've come to grips with the myriad options available.

R35 PD32

USS TICONDEROGA 78

Mindscape, £9.99

Detailed naval strategy game. For people with strategic navels.



Follow-up to Railroad Tycoon that has you moving into the world of aeroplanes and buses and stuff. Beautifully designed and thought-out, Excellent, hierarchical dropdown menus, and a playing area that feels about four times the size of Sim City 2000's. One of the best strategy games around

R21 PD21



MicroProse, £34.99

Top-notch strategy/resource management game with turn-based fighting against big

squishy blobby aliens that are quite scary if you screw your eyes up. Amazingly addictive and compelling, it spawned the allconquering sequel. X-COM. Available on Power, Corruption and Lies compilation, with Dune 2 and two others.

R15, 16 T16, 18, 33

V FOR VICTORY 3: MARKET GARDEN 82 Three-Sixty Pacific, £34.99

Excellent wargame for those who are bored with boards.

R VIRTUA CHESS 85 Titus, £44.99

Snazzy, 3D SVGA chess action with a sophisticated AI that adjusts its difficulty level if you're out of your depth. Still very tough, although not as 'nails' as Chessmaster. Nice graphical extras, but not as many gameplay options nor is it as subtle as the upgraded Kasparov's Gambit.

R97 PD95

WARCRAFT 75

Interplay, £39.99

Simple, addictive strategy game.

R22 PD22 T24

WARCRAFT 2: TIDES OF DARKNESS 82 R Zablac, £44.99

Very addictive and enjoyable sequel, with a good network option and some improved AI and controls.

WARGAME CONSTRUCTION KIT 2: TANKS

SSI, £39.99

Absolutely brilliant wargame construction kit (it says here).

Mindscape, £39.99 Addictive Windows 95 real-time strategy game that's a bit too hard, with fiddly

R18

R WORMS & Ocean, £34.99

A cross between Leemings and Cannon Fodder of limited one-player appeal, but brilliant in multi-player mode (up to four can play on a single machine). Turn-based combat revolves around using a variety of destructive weaponry to blow the arses well and truly off your opponents. A

great laugh. R33 PD32 T39



X-COM: TERROR FROM THE DEEP 94 MicroProse, £44.99

The follow-up to UFO: Enemy Unknown, it's another turn-based strategy/combat classic, but this time set underwater, that will have you up till all hours, losing your sleep, job and girlfriend while you fight the jelly-like alien terrors from the... uh... well, deep.

R96 PB95

Time Warner Interactive, £44.95

Addictive Command & Conquer-style game, based on occupation of zoned areas to control weapon-producing factories. As a result, it's more strategic than C&C, and lacks the exploration aspect. Network options, entertaining cut scenes and soldiers who feel free to criticise your efforts. And criticise you they will, because it's very, very hard indeed



SOFTWARE





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WORDPROCESSOR

Dear *PC Zone*, they say.
"Who?", "What?", "When?" and "Why?"
they say! And we say ****!



(Above) We haven't had a problem with *Quake* running in jerko-vision. Stick to the standard res and check out the *QuakeSpy* utility on this month's CD if you want to play on-line.

SLOW! SLOW! QUAKE-QUAKE! SLOOOOW!

This is not another *Duke* versus *Quake* rant, but just a few thoughts on the review you ran a couple of months ago. As with most Macca reviews it was an enjoyable read, but I thought that the omission of the 'sLow' icon was a tad naughty. I also don't recall seeing anything about *Quake's* sluggishness over the Internet (and I'm talking *Internet* here, not the two-foot cable between CIX's router and their server).

Popeye (PC Zone CIX Conference)

Slow? SLOW? We quite happily ran Quake on a P75 in the office with 8Mb RAM and it ran baby-bot smooth (albeit in the default res).

As for Internet play - well, yes, it can be a little jerky, a little chunky, a little sluggish, but a nice 28K Internet connection with a nice reputable provider linked to a nice big server located somewhere in this nice hemisphere should result in nothing less than an nice exciting, playable game of Quake. That's been our experience, anyway. In short, we are skill and you are not. Try the CIX Quake server (you will need a CIX Internet account to run this) or alternatively, we've been getting some pretty good connections using QuakeSpy, a handy little utility that searches for Quake servers, tells you how fast your connection will be, and even who's playing and what their scores are. It's on our CD this month. Failing that try 194.119.129.200/207 for a super smooth connection. Well, it works for us.

Macca

IT'S ALL GREEK TO ME

As you can read on the folder (sic) I am from Greece and I think I am the first Greek person to write to you. Look, I really like this magazine, not only 'cause

Letter of the month
HELP ME GET ON-LINE

Help, I know my fair share about PCs and want to get on-line. Every shop I go into tries to plug some server or package.

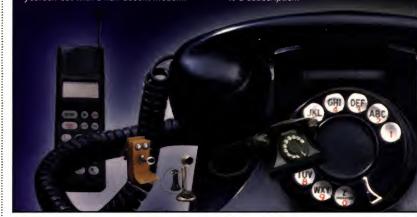
All I want is some decent independent advice and I can't get any. Duke is pants. I understand most jargon, but I am not fluent and I have nowhere to turn. Quake is righteous. Please give me some advice or point to where I can get some. I expect a ridiculing, but can you please squeeze some helpful words in between the witty insults.

Lost and unconnected,

lan, Hemel Hempstead

It's okay to be afraid. It's a big bad world out there on-line. Your best bet is to sort yourself out with a half decent modem. We recommend you go for at least a 28.8 (28,800 bps) and preferably an external one (they're generally easier to install). Check out the US Robotics Sportster range (01734 228200) as they're universally used (and liked). Most modems come with demos that give you 'free' time on-line so they can check out what kind of service they provide, a sort of 'try before you buy' (or subscribe) type affair.

Alternatively, our CD usually carries 'free' on-line demos (CompuServe/ VosNet/CIX etc) that you can have a look at, so you'll be able to check out which service best suits your needs before you commit yourself financially to a subscription.



it is the best in Europe, but 'cause the persons who work on it are GREAT!

I, moreover, like you because when you get an interactive movie or some other games in your hands for review you don't say (I hope) "What! Another crap, dicky interactive movie, let's put a 'Pants' award on it and we finish!" but you take a look at it first.

Something else: you must take more care for your foreign readers!! You cannot neglect us and write in your magazine as if you were (the English) the unique country in the world! Besides, you must take into account that PC Zone issue 42 has been

bought by more of 5,000 persons in Greece! At least reduce these f**ing weird words that you use that are not in the dictionary! Thank-you!

P.S. Z is f**ing brilliant, but very difficult. Give me a damn hand.

Macedonia is only Greek, the Aegean too! (???) Although I haven't managed to take the Cambridge Proficiency I hope you can make head or tails of my letter!

Panos Lintsayor, Athens

Erh, thanks for the compli-

ment. You're not that
bloke Paul (new
News Ed.) met on
holiday in Corfu
are you? He's not
interested, so just
leave it, okay? He
wants you to forget
about him and get
on with his life.

Anyway, we're all very glad you like the mag and appreciate how conscientious we are when reviewing games.

(Right) Greece, it's a bit like Spain, innit?

We don't make PC Zone difficult to read on purpose, it's just that most of our reviewers haven't got their Cambridge Proficiency either and have a tendency to make up words.

Quite where you get your circulation figures from is a mystery to us, though we're glad that PC Zone is so well represented overseas. However, you'll probably be pleased to hear that we'll be publishing a Greek wersion as from this month which will no doubt be a lot easier for you to read as it will all be in Greek

Thanks again for your comments, and don't worry about your English, it's a lot better than our Greek. Yasou (?)

FACKING ASTERISKS!

What the f*k is going on? In the summing up of Quake in issue 43 you said that it was f*king brilliant. Stop right there! I'm not going to slag off one of the best games of the year. I'm not even going to compare it against Duke 'Damn I'm good! 'Nukem. What I am going to have a go at is the f*king censorship that has recently begun to appear in the pages of PC Zone.
Fack? What the hell kind of word is 'fack'? Games for W*kers? Do you mean walkers? Winkers? No, it's workers, innit?

F**k it. I don't need my innocent eyes to be shielded from such naughty words. I know you've heard this argument before, but you were big 'n' hard a few issues back. It was water off a duck's back. I also realise that a certain proportion of your readers may be under 18, but the kids round our way swear like f**k anyway!

Hey, forget you, motherfunster! Most of the funniest humour in *Zone* comes from the creative use of naughtiness. Are you scared that if Labour wins the next General

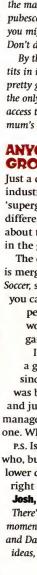
General Election you're going to have to be politically correct?

Cut the censorship, stick Zone on the top shelf and put some t*ts in it!

Lee Ebblewhite, Notts, Aged 9

Okay, so you have a problem with asterisks. We're not completely happy using them either, but sometimes, when the obscenities (Right) The perfect footie game coming soon? Maybe, but not from Molyneux, Romero and Hall.

(Below) Wot! Not as many obscenities? But we do have plenty of pix of a foxy chick.



are flying thick and fast, we have to restore some kind of coherence to the page.

Normally, we don't get too heavy about the swearing thing, and if it's humorous rather than just plain obscene, it will be left well alone by the subeditors and the rest

of the team. Occasionally, we have to swap certain characters for asterisks, and when we do so it's usually pretty obvious what the author means.

Although PC Zone is very much an adult mag, aimed at and read by people (mostly males) in their 20s, we have to consider that the mag might be picked up by the odd prepubescent wandering around Smith's. Hence you might find the odd asterisk in the mag. Don't despair – just use your imagination.

By the way, this month's mag doesn't have tits in it, but it's full of photos of a (very) pretty girly. As you're only nine, presumably the only other photos of women you have access to are the lingerie pages in your mum's catalogue, so count yourself lucky.

Anyone for a super group?

Just a quick thought. In the music industry there have been a number of 'supergroups' comprising artists from different recording companies. Isn't it about time we had something like this in the gaming industry?

The example that springs to my mind is merging CM2 with FIFA 96 or Actua Soccer, so that having picked your team you can then see how they actually

perform under your control. This would make one of the greatest games ever.

I've personally been searching for a game of this type for years, ever since Anco's Player Manager (which was brilliant, but very limited) and judging by the sales of footie management games I'm not the only one. What do the rest of you think?

P.S. Is this a record? Can't remember who, but t'other day while searching the lower divisions in CM2 I came across a right back still turning out at 88!!

Josh, Warwickshire

There's a rumour going around at the moment that Peter Molyneux, John Romero and Dan Hall are getting together to swap ideas, technology and chew the gaming cud. Quite what they're going to do is a mystery (if, indeed, they do anything at all), but considering the trio's credentials, it's unlikely that they'll be working on a footie game.

At present, there are mutterings that EA Sports are working on a football management sim that might just tie in with the new FIFA 97, though nothing has been confirmed as yet. Sensible tried to do it with Sensible World Of Soccer, but it didn't quite work. As far as we know, Domark aren't planning to release an arcade/management game, although CM3 will feature network play with every manager of a club being an actual player. All transfers and matches will be conducted on-line, and every player will be 'owned' by a 'real' manager who decides terms, tactics and transfers. It sounds great, and more importantly, quite feasible. Personally I can't wait.

Your 88-year-old right back is new to us, John Wark usually decides to hank up his boots at the grand old age of 38 and Shilts will usually play 'til he's around 50. A number of players have been known to retire at the ripe old age of 19, though we presume they got into modelling or something. Z

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Don't forget to check out the *PC Zone* CIX conference if you're on-line.

If your letter is selected as 'Letter of the Month' we'll send you a bundle of T-shirts and maybe even a game. COO!

NB: PC Zone retain the right to completely edit, re-write and change all correspondence in order to make them even more smug, funny and witty.



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[ON SALE 14 NOVEMBER]

THE Feltham Green Gazette 23p

THURSDAY OCTOBER 10 1996

OWN FOOLS!

SPECULATION WAS GROWING last night that the latest rounds of family in-fighting have finally pushed Her Majesty 'over the edge'

The Feltham Green Gazette has had exclusive access to talk to staff at the palace, and has been allowed to see internal staff memorandums that show of "untoward" and "dangerous" activity at the royal residence.

Queen Starts Dance

DETAILS OF a palace in turmoil emerged last night as disgruntled and embittered staff spoke publicly for the first time of "odd" and "strange" royal requests they had received from the Queen in the last few months, after her long and protracted battle with the Princess of Wales.

Those who work at the palace have been leaking details of "inappropriate" behaviour by the Queen. Insiders say she has opened up 'The Bruise Clan', a sick and morbid club inside the palace where staff have to compare any bruises they receive while working hard for the Queen. The Queen judges who has the largest bruise of the week and then 'gets hers out' to show off how 'hard' she still is. Staff said that the member with the largest bruise or 'area of pain' got an extra £50 on top of their normal salary. "It's almost like she's testing our guts," a palace spokesman said. "She has such unbeatable bruises sometimes that £50 isn't that easy to get," he added.

Her Royal Highness has written to all staff with a 'royal request' that all staff learn a dance she calls the 'Hunga-Bunga'. Worried staff feel that unless they can learn the dance 'properly' they will suffer financially, a rumour the Queen last night was very quick to deny. "I want to watch them move, I don't want to punish anyone, ever, except of course that sl*g Diana," she said last Saturday night.



The Corgis at play yesterday.

time close friend and confident of the Queen, insists she's not a tell-tale, but Her Majesty has really "wound her up". "I ain't no grass like, but she done me 'ead in like, innit." She went on, "People need learning about her."

When the Queen was discovered hiding winnetts from the royal corgis all over the palace and in nearby fields, staff began to break under the strain of

her brand new routine "Enough is enough!" said the Queen's personal valet.

We are all very concerned, she needs help, although I legally withhold my right not to be the one to help her," he cautiously added.

A field like the Queen 'uses' for dog



Boffin City

WE DECIDED to get some expert advice so we called several leading brain boffins and they concluded that the Queen was going a bit "funny".

"This is not the sort of behaviour one would expect from a member of the royal family." They concluded that the pressure from the annus horribilis and the amount of money given to Di, a prettier, nicer girl,

had pushed her "over the edge".

"Look at the evidence," they said. "Di's got nice legs, the Queen hasn't. She's got children who haven't been divorced yet, the Queen hasn't. This is why she's hiding dog poo as a way of having babies again, but without having

to have babies again. "If she sees people have fun around her she can pretend to herself that she is FUN ITSELF."

When questioned about the 'bruise clan', the boffins were keen to tell us that this was her way of showing people how hurt she is.

"It's obvious, isn't it?" they added. "See my bruise - share my pain."

They concluded by saving that the pressure of running the country and having had to give so much money to a pretty woman had pushed her into a 'HELP ME MODE'.PI



Brown Jewels

CLEANER JOAN SELBY was startled to find that doggy trays in the royal kitchen were mysteriously empty each morning. Worried staff thought that the royal corgis might be sick, or even worse, pooing elsewhere in the palace.

But video footage was GRABBED that clearly shows the Queen in her nightie making a midnight visit to the trays and carefully searching through the grey gravel for winnetts.

She then hid the 'brown jewels' throughout the palace.

Bruise Club

THE QUEEN'S BEHAVIOUR has been getting steadily worse since her nice house burnt down a couple of years ago, but insiders at the palace have confirmed in writing to us that she really "turned" when Lady Di "got so much money from me." She apparently went "bitter" and that's when she started "that silly bruise club thing". The staff weren't too concerned at that point as life had been fairly good up till then, but learning the Hunga-Bunga really shows how obsessive she has become.

The Bill

POLICE WERE CALLED IN to see if the Queen was possibly checking royal bomb security arrangements, but this line of enquiry was ended abruptly after she was caught talking to the turds and brooding over them as if they were her 'eggs'.

She was later seen in the early hours hiding them in fields which surround Buckingham Palace.

The police then correctly came to the conclusion that this was not a matter they could assist in, and Detective Inspector Nelson, who was in charge of the operation and had been personally keeping a close eye on the Queen, suggested staff call a local "Quack".

"This is not a matter for us - she's a NUTTER, get help quick, before she explodes!"



D.I. Nelson keeps a close eye on the Queen.

Accused

WE APPROACHED a palace spokeswoman late last night and accused the Queen of being a nutter. She said the

Queen wasn't exactly a nutter but was unavailable for comment and said we had exaggerated our story out of all proportion. But she did ask us if we could send in some witch hazel, which we didn't, of course, as it's illegal.

MR CURSOR





brilliant game I've discovered on the Internet, but I can't just yet because I've first got to let off steam about something that's blaring away on the telly. It's Sunday afternoon as I write this, you see, and my senses are being assaulted by *Junior Masterchef.* (Or Junior Master-Race, to be more accurate.) Lloyd every constant of the state of the stat

WAS ABOUT TO TELL YOU ABOUT A

Grossman has just introduced the three youths in question. Young Sarah, apparently, regularly wins 'blue ribbons' at dressage competitions... helped largely

by the fact that she owns three horses. Young Gavin, on the other hand, only owns one horse: but this doesn't stop him being president of the Young Fascists
Association at his unfeasibly expensive public

bless her heart, doesn't own any horses at all – but then again she doesn't need to. (Who needs a horse when you've got a full-size heated swimming pool in your bedroom?)

And their menus were even worse: quail and hare tureen; lamb noisettes topped with a carrot and ginger 'swirl'; crab and olive parcels in lime; glazed truffles with asparagus coulis.

Jesus!

school. Poor

young Siobhan,

Why don't the BBC get hold of some 'normal' 12-year-old kids? What's wrong with beefburgers, beans, egg and chips? And a Curly Wurly for pudding?

Space is at a premium...

Piss! Junior bloody Masterchef has got me so annoyed that I want to explore it further, but then I won't have time to tell you about what I've been doing with the 'traffic lights'. I'll take a few deep breaths and calm down... Okay, I'm over Junior Masterchef. I'm ready to continue.

Right, I was zapping through the Internet a couple of days ago when I realised I had become 'lost'. (As you do.) No matter though, because I was 'lost' in a pretty groovy location. Someone had hacked into the Traffic Light computer in Southwark, south London, and the switches and what have you were right in front of me, on my monitor – all labelled for ease of use. There was also a promise that the local cctv camera images would be on-line soon as well, but I didn't need these as my flat overlooks

He's afraid of ... Junior Masterchefs and Traffic Lights

a large portion of the Old Kent Road anyway, meaning I had real-time images. (Life size, with no jerko-vision whatso-ever, and in genuine 3D.) So I got to work.

1. A very long red light for eastbound traffic. This soon built up a queue which stretched back to the Elephant and

Castle roundabout. Horns were being beeped. Excellent.

2. An unbelievably long green 'crossing' light for the numerous pedestrians streaming out of Tesco's, followed by a few amber and green 'blips' for the motorists.

3. Time passed. Now the motorists were becoming acclimatised. They knew the score, as it were, which was that they had to wheelspin away on the first sign of amber – the green light wasn't going to be up for long.

4. Then I spotted a nun coming out of Tesco's. Superb timing! I waited for her to reach the edge of the road and clicked the mouse button. A perfect result. The Range Rover just managed to brake in time, but, as I'd hoped, it was rammed from behind by a truck which didn't. The nun flipped into the air, and landed on the roof rack of a fast-moving Volvo estate, headed in the opposite direction. (The driver was oblivious. The nun could be in Wales now for all I know.)

Game on...

I've now developed rules for this game, but it's not going to be fully playable until the CCTV cameras come on-line. Once that happens I'll print the URL (The Internet address – Ed.) so we can have some multi-player modem capers. But here's the rough idea of what's going to be happening:

1. Player one broadcasts a message to the other players; something like: "I want an elderly woman wearing a silly hat delivered to the Esso petrol station on the Camberwell Road." The other players then scan all available ccrvs (preferably ones as near to the Camberwell Road as possible).
 Once the required target (ie. old woman in silly hat) has been spotted by someone, it's onto the traffic light controls for that area. Now for the tricky bit (which I'm now brilliant at, incidentally), which is to place said woman on the roof of a car or truck... without the driver being made aware.
 The player who pulls this off first

4. The player who pulls this off first sends a message to player one: "Player 24 calling. Old woman in silly hat acquired. She is currently on roof of Saab 900, registration D561 LRO. ETA at Camberwell is 15 minutes."

5. All the other players are made aware of this fact, and have two options. They can continue to search for their own 'old woman in silly hat', or they can intercept the winning player's car and attempt to 'steal' the 'ball' by setting up a traffic light incident in which the elderly woman exchanges cars. (In which case, they inform player one of their identity, the new vehicle's make and type, and its registration number.) 6. Whoever currently has claim to the 'ball' still has a fight on their hands... which is to force the 'host car' to drive (in this scenario) to the Esso garage on the Camberwell Road. (A working knowledge of the street layouts of south-east London is necessary, but you can buy a London A-z just about anywhere.) 7. Once the host car has been 'herded'

to the required area (or DZ – Drop Zone), a simple shunt should deliver the 'ball' to the ground. A goal has been scored. The scorer of this goal now becomes the challenger: "I want a boy scout delivered to the Pizza Hut in Jamaica Road, SE1." And so on. It's not unlike snooker.

Please, please, please...

A final thought has just occurred. Maybe the Internet traffic light catchment area will be increased at the same time the cctv stuff is uploaded. And maybe it will include Shepherds Bush, an area around the BBC TV studios. Wow, yes! Seeing as I've invented this game I think it only fair that I get to set the very first challenge, and this is it: "Deliver a Junior Masterchef contestant into the River Thames." Reckon you're up to the challenge? (Go for a head-on smash at the bottom of Northumberland Avenue – Ed.) T

(Right) Hats off to the new multi-player, ninjatastic, leaves-Doom-standing Traffic Lights game (@ Mr Cursor 1996).

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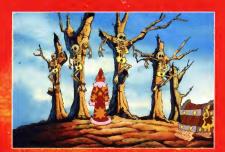
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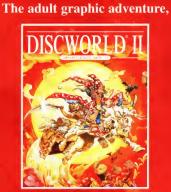
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